

**A brief summary of three “opinion surveys”
conducted by non-governmental organisations**

During the public engagement exercise, we received three submissions from stakeholder groups that contained the findings of three “opinion surveys”. The submissions were from the Lion Rock Institute, Mr. Paul Zimmerman, Southern District Council member, and Designing Hong Kong. Based on our consolidation and analysis of the findings of the three opinion surveys, a brief summary of the findings are presented below.

1. The Lion Rock Institute

The Lion Rock Institute (“LRI”) conducted an opinion survey on the ERP Pilot Scheme on streets and at public transport interchanges in the Central District. A total of 1 080 members of the public were successfully interviewed. Among the respondents, 85% of them went in or out of the Central District more than four times a week, about 50% frequently used public transport and nearly 30% were professional drivers (including bus, minibus, taxi and goods vehicle drivers). The key survey findings were as follows:

- 1) Nearly 90% of the respondents considered that traffic congestion in the Central District was serious; 60% to 70% considered that private car and goods vehicle were the major vehicle types causing traffic congestion.
- 2) 70% of the respondents objected to the Government’s plan of implementing the Pilot Scheme and expanding it to other areas in future.
- 3) 60% of the respondents considered that the Pilot Scheme would not be necessary if the Government had already implemented such measures

as raising the tolls of Road Harbour Crossings (“RHCs”), rationalising bus services, strengthening enforcement actions against offending vehicles and commissioning the Central – Wan Chai Bypass.

- 4) Nearly 50% of the respondents considered exemption should be granted to public transport (including buses, minibuses and trams); only 20% to 30% considered that taxis, private cars and commercial vehicles should be granted exemption. Moreover, 65% considered that exemption should be given to environment-friendly vehicles (such as electric vehicles).
- 5) Nearly 70% of the respondents objected to passengers shouldering the additional operating costs if public transport would not be given any exemption.
- 6) About 65% of the professional drivers and private car drivers interviewed were not worried about any privacy issues that may be engendered by the implementation of the Pilot Scheme.
- 7) 40% of the respondents were reluctant to pay any ERP charges for solving the congestion problem; 40% were only willing to pay less than \$5 a day; about 20% were willing to pay more than \$5 a day.

The LRI considered that the above findings showed that the public had not given support to the implementation of ERP. The survey reflected the public aspirations that the Government should first implement measures such as raising the tolls of RHCs, rationalising bus services, strengthening enforcement actions against offending vehicles and commissioning the Central – Wan Chai Bypass. The foregoing measures were considered more effective in alleviating the traffic congestion in the Central District. As such, before the Central – Wan Chai Bypass has been commissioned and the foregoing simple measures have been carried out, the LRI would oppose to the implementation of the Pilot Scheme. Besides, the LRI considered that since the Government had not yet proposed the amount of the charges to be levied under the Pilot Scheme, it would not be possible to assess the effectiveness of the scheme. Also, many of the respondents objected to

ERP charges being passed on to passengers if public transport would not be given any exemption.

2. Mr. Paul Zimmerman, Southern District Council member

Mr. Paul Zimmerman, Southern District Council member, conducted an online survey on the Pilot Scheme targeted at the residents of the Pokfulam Constituency. In that survey, 25% of the respondents usually used private cars for commuting while 27% usually used public transport. Those who used both accounted for 48%.

Views on the implementation of the Pilot Scheme

The survey collected 135 responses from the Pokfulam residents. Among them, 46% supported the Pilot Scheme, 48% opposed it and 6% had no comment. The survey results showed that the level of support or opposition of the Pokfulam residents to the Pilot Scheme was about the same.

Major views on six basic elements

(1) Charging area

A higher proportion of Pokfulam residents considered that the charging area should be confined to the Central District or some of the roads within it. Some views suggested that the charging area should cover the Central District and other areas, such as Sheung Wan, Admiralty, Wan Chai and Causeway Bay, etc. The residents mainly suggested that the boundary of the charging area should be drawn up according to the level of traffic congestion.

(2) Charging mechanism

The Pokfulam residents were more inclined to choose the area-based mechanism (charging per day) but some residents had no strong

preference on the two charging mechanisms (i.e. the area-based and cordon-based mechanisms).

(3) Charging period

More views agreed that the ERP charge should be imposed throughout the hours of a day when the traffic flow is high, and there should be no charge on Sundays and public holidays.

(4) Charging level

The residents had diverse views over the charging approaches to be adopted under the Pilot Scheme. Although more views were in favour of a unified charge for all vehicle types or differential charges based on vehicle sizes, there were also views in support of differential charges based on vehicle's carrying capacities. More respondents considered that if the Pilot Scheme adopted the cordon-based mechanism (charging per pass), the suggested charging rate ranged from \$10 to \$50 per pass, with some suggesting very high levels such as \$200. Some respondents considered that if the Pilot Scheme adopted the area-based mechanism (charging per day), the suggested charging rate ranged between \$20 and \$200 per day.

(5) Exemption and concession

A higher proportion of the residents supported giving exemption or concession to public transport, taxis and vehicles for the disabled. However, there were a number of residents who held the view that no vehicles (except emergency vehicles) should be given exemption.

(6) Technology

The numbers of views preferring the DSRC technology or ANPR technology were roughly the same while some respondents had no strong preference on the technology to be adopted.

Major views on three pertinent issues

(1) Privacy concerns

Only a minority of all views were concerned about any privacy issues pertaining to the Pilot Scheme. Certain residents were worried about the data collected in the Pilot Scheme would be used for purposes other than charging or their movements might be monitored. Most residents were not worried or had no comment on the privacy issue.

(2) Effectiveness

An overwhelming majority of residents opined that the charging level should be kept under regular review and suitably adjusted as and when necessary to maintain its effectiveness. On the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme, many respondents considered using traffic flows or traffic speeds as the main key indicators but may consider using air pollution level in the charging area as an indicator.

(3) Complementary measures

The residents mainly suggested that the enforcement actions against traffic offences should be strengthened along with the implementation of the Pilot Scheme. Moreover, there were voices calling for enhanced public transport services, additional park-and-ride facilities, improved pedestrian or cycling facilities, and restriction on the number of vehicles.

In the submission letter of the online survey results, Mr. Paul Zimmerman pointed out that as the Pokfulam district had not yet been served by railway services and the minibus and bus services in the district were not quite regular, he worried about the impact that might be brought by the Pilot Scheme on the Pokfulam residents as some of them used to commute by their private cars.

3. Designing Hong Kong

Designing Hong Kong conducted an online survey targeted at the visitors* of its webpage. In that survey, 14% of the respondents usually used private cars for commuting while 54% usually used public transport. Those who used both accounted for 32%.

Views on the implementation of the Pilot Scheme

The survey collected 375 responses. Among them, 68% supported the Pilot Scheme, 29% opposed it and 3% had no comment.

Major views on six basic elements

(1) Charging area

A higher proportion of responses considered that the charging area should cover the Central District and other areas such as Sheung Wan, Admiralty, Wan Chai and Causeway Bay, etc. Some views suggested designating a larger charging area to cover as many congested places as possible. There were views suggesting that the charging area should be confined to the Central District or some of the roads within it. Regarding how the boundary of the charging area should be demarcated, a majority of views suggested considering it according to the level of traffic congestion, traffic flow and traffic speed as well as the provision of a free-of-charge alternative route for bypassing the charging area.

(2) Charging mechanism

The numbers of respondents preferring the area-based mechanism or cordon-based mechanism were roughly the same. Some respondents had no strong preference on the two mechanisms.

* Designing Hong Kong conducted an online opinion survey at its webpage (www.designinghongkong.com) between 2 March 2016 and 15 March 2016 and invited participation by people who visited the webpage.

(3) Charging period

More views agreed that the ERP charge should be imposed throughout the hours of a day when the traffic flow is high, and there should be no charge on Sundays and public holidays. There were also views indicating that the charges should be imposed on some of the Sundays and public holidays when special events would be held and could cause the traffic congestion.

(4) Charging level

A larger proportion of respondents considered that differential charges should be set based on various traffic conditions / vehicle sizes / vehicles' carrying capacities / occupancies. There were also views supporting a unified charge for all vehicle types. A majority of respondents considered that if the Pilot Scheme adopted the cordon-based mechanism (charging per pass), the suggested charging rate ranged from \$10 to \$90 per pass, while some suggesting higher levels between \$100 and \$180. Some respondents considered if the Pilot Scheme adopted the area-based mechanism (charging per day), the suggested charging rate ranged from \$30 to \$50 per day, while some suggesting higher levels between \$100 and \$500.

(5) Exemption and concession

More respondents supported granting exemption or concession to public transport, taxis, vehicles for the disabled and residents living in the charging area. However, there were many views expressing that no vehicles (except emergency vehicles) should be given exemption.

(6) Technology

The numbers of views preferring the DSRC technology or ANPR technology were roughly the same while some respondents had no strong preference on the technology to be adopted.

Major views on three pertinent issues

(1) Privacy concerns

Most of the respondents were not worried about any privacy issues pertaining to the Pilot Scheme while only very few respondents expressed concern on this issue.

(2) Effectiveness

An overwhelming majority of respondents opined that the charging level should be kept under regular review and suitably adjusted as and when necessary. On the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme, many respondents considered using traffic flows, air pollution level or traffic speeds in the charging area as key indicators.

(3) Complementary measures

More respondents suggested that the enforcement actions against traffic offences should be strengthened along with the implementation of the Pilot Scheme. Some respondents suggested enhancing public transport services and providing additional park-and-ride facilities. There were individuals suggesting the enhancement of pedestrian or cycling facilities and the toll adjustment of the three RHCs.

In the submission letter of the online survey results, Designing Hong Kong expressed the grave concerns made by the respondents over inadequate parking facilities and ineffective enforcement actions against illegal parking in the Central District. As the costs and merits of different technologies were not yet available at this stage, the views on the technology to be adopted were diverse. In the same vein, as the details of different charging area boundaries and charging approaches were not yet available, the Government ought to formulate more detailed options for discussion with the public.