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Press release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

30 October 2020, Hong Kong

HKAA strongly requests the Government to implement effective policies and measures to solve the problem of insufficient private car parking spaces

As early as 2006, Hong Kong has been facing the insufficiency of private car parking space. The long-standing shortage of parking spaces has caused many traffic problems, such as causing traffic congestion due to waiting for parking spaces, and illegal parking. However, besides with the fact of Government failing to improve the situation, the lack of parking space has been worsened into urgent matter with the rapid increasing number of new vehicle on-road in recent year. As result, the number of parking spaces has become disproportionate to the number of vehicles.

Data shows that the problem of inadequate parking spaces has existed for more than 15 years

Figure 1- Number of parking spaces by vehicle type in various districts (as of August 2019)

Numbers of Parking Spaces by Districts and by Vehicle Types in Hong Kong (as at August 2019)

District	Motor-cycles	Private cars ¹	Goods vehicles ²	Coaches and public non-franchised buses	Total ³
Central and Western	1 408	38 469	1 162	84	41 123
Wan Chai	1 305	39 663	413	123	41 504
Eastern	2 416	46 456	1 885	334	51 091
Southern	1 862	39 292	1 196	347	42 697
Yau Tsim Mong	2 090	34 286	2 537	251	39 164
Sham Shui Po	1 985	29 180	3 167	435	34 767
Kowloon City	1 941	48 765	1 343	286	52 335
Wong Tai Sin	2 282	20 845	1 291	139	24 557
Kwun Tong	4 245	46 610	3 317	196	54 368
Tsuen Wan	1 475	37 004	1 986	425	40 890
Tuen Mun	1 714	41 326	2 524	182	45 746
Yuen Long	1 745	41 558	2 118	352	45 773
North	842	21 725	1 757	77	24 401
Tai Po	994	29 072	1 192	140	31 398
Sai Kung	2 986	41 333	1 579	328	46 226
Sha Tin	2 932	73 405	2 711	221	79 269
Kwai Tsing	2 702	35 917	11 056	294	49 969
Islands	620	16 682	796	242	18 340
Total	35 544	681 588	42 030	4 456	763 618

Figure 1, as of August 2019, there were 2047 government-owned indoor car parks with about 195,000 parking spaces, mainly located in Kowloon and Kwun Tong Roads, and about 495,000 private car parking spaces in private car parks in Hong Kong. In other words, there are about 680,000 private car parking spaces in Hong Kong. Most private car parking spaces located in non-Central Business District, ie Shatin.

Figure 2- The ratio of licensed vehicles and parking spaces from 2008 to 2019

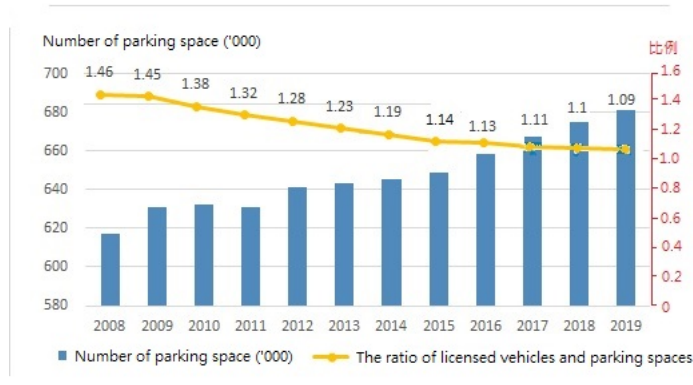


Figure 2, from 2008 to 2019, the ratio of private cars and parking spaces had been declining, from 1.46 to 1.09 in 2008-2019, the lowest of the decade, which proved that the Government has completely ignored the needs of private car owners.

Figure 3 - Number of parking spaces in government car parks managed by the Transport Department (as of 1 January 2020)

Location / year	Number of parking space		
	2004	2016	2020
1 Car parks managed by TD Private cars / Light Goods Vehicle	6,677	5,211	3,191
2 Wong Tai Sin Public Transport Terminus Car Park (outdoor) Private cars / Light Goods Vehicle	194	91	0
合共	6,871	5,302	3,191

Figure 3, disregard of the car park shortage, the cancellation of car park land-use has been continuously approved by the government. For example, Murray Road Car Park (with 324 parking spaces) which was demolished in 2017; Sheung Shui Park-and-Ride Car Park ceased operation in 2018 (with 194 parking spaces); and Yau Ma Tei Multi-storey Car Park (with 770 parking spaces) will also be demolished in 2020 to tie in with the Central Kowloon Route project.

The above information clearly shows that the insufficient proportion between the registered vehicle and parking spaces will only be worsened if Government proceed its incompetent polices as before. Mr. Frank CHAN, Secretary for Transport and Housing, at a Legislative Council Finance Committee meeting held on 10th May 2019 indicated that the ideal parking space is 1.4 or 1.5 per car that is equivalent to the figure in 2008. The current figure of 1.09 indicated that the government has been ignoring insufficient parking space over the past decade, leading to adverse impact we encounter today.



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The Causes of Insufficient Parking Space

The government has cut down 46% of the government owned parking space in 15 years from 2004 to 2020 comparing to the number, which is decreased from 6,871 parking spaces in 2004 to 3,192 parking spaces in 2020. Even according to the announcement of the Transport Department in 2019, the new Smart Parking System will be commissioned in early 2021 at Hoi Shing Road, Tsuen Wan and Yen Chow Street, Sham Shui Po to promote the Smart Parking Scheme. The project is expected to provide about 270 and 180 parking spaces respectively, which means that the two smart car parks will only have 450 parking spaces in total, it is only better than nothing to solve the high demand of parking spaces.

The neighbouring city, Taipei, has similar problems as Hong Kong. However, by adopting the effective policy and with the effort of the Mayor of Taipei, the number of parking areas have been increased in less than a year, which is a far more efficient plan than Hong Kong Government's plan of increasing only 450 parking areas.

The Government and the public have been arguing that the shortage of parking spaces is mainly due to the growth of licensed vehicles, but this is in fact caused by the housing planning policy. According to the Population Distribution Projections 2009 to 2018 and Population and Household Statistics Analysed by District Council District 2019 by Census and Statistics Department, the residential areas of the Hong Kong population have gradually shifted northwards between 2009 and 2019. The population of the New Territories has grown the most, from 3.6 million in 2009 to nearly 4 million in 2019, with a cumulative increase of 9.47%, reaching 3.338 million, which is 1.66% higher than the 7.81% increase in the total population of Hong Kong.

In addition, statistics indicates that the local median monthly income has increased from \$17,500 in 2009 to \$28,700 in 2019, with an average increment of 64%. In the New Territories, the median monthly income per household increased from \$15,800 in 2009 to \$28,800 in 2019, with an average increment over 80%, which is 16% more than the local increment. The figures indicated that the demand of New Territories residents for private cars for daily transportation has grown substantially over the past decade.

However, the government has not made corresponding policies and developments to meet this huge demand. For the middle class, in particular, the significant increase in the number of private car users is a direct result of their need to use private cars for

daily commuting when the public transport network is unable to cope with their migration. During the past decade, the number of valid private car licences has increased from 424,393 in 2008 to 624,990 in 2019, representing an increase of 200,000 units, or 47%, and accounting for nearly 60% of the cumulative increase of 338,000 private car users. This shows that the growth of private cars is directly related to the housing policy, and that private cars are nowadays mainly used as a means of transportation for the public, which is completely different from the traditional concept of luxury goods. At the same time, the shortage of parking spaces is not only a result of inadequate transport policy, but also a result of traffic problems arising from the housing policy.

Figure 4, Projected population by district council district in 2009 and 2019

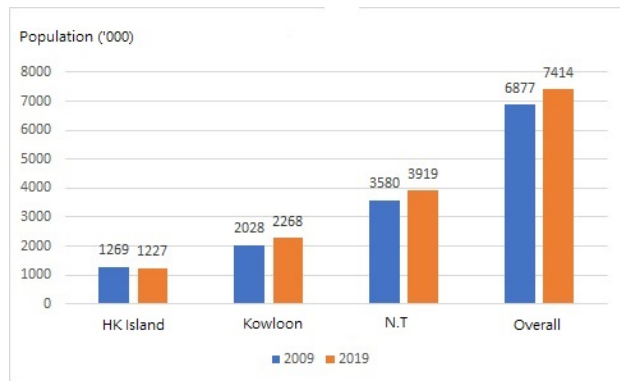
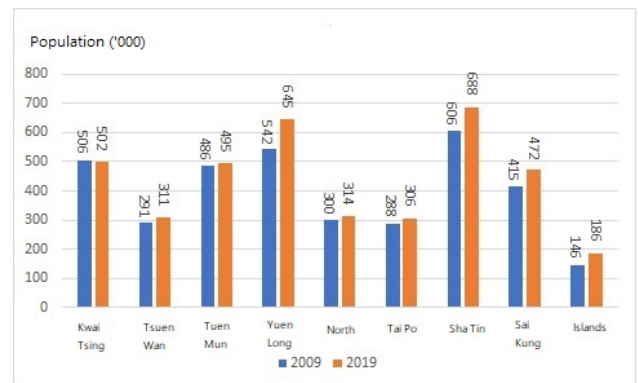


Figure 5, Projected population by New Town/Other Area in the New Territories in 2009 and 2019



The Hong Kong SAR Government should focus on a more comprehensive approach to housing and transport policies, and a long-term and complete plan is urgently needed to meet the needs of the public, with the involvement of multiple departments and stakeholders.

Over the years, HKAA has been reflecting the problem of insufficient parking spaces to the Government, but the Government has been adopting an ostrich policy to deal with the problem, and has been sticking to its old rut, thus causing the problem to get worse and worse. It is evident that the Government has completely ignored the views of stakeholders in its policy direction. Having said that, however, this Council is still committed to reflect the views of private car owners and proposing feasible and effective options to the Government for detailed study. Regarding the social problems



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arising from inadequate parking spaces, we would like to put forward the following proposals in the hope that the Government will adopt an open attitude in examining and studying them.

Solution (1)

Pilot Project of Automated Parking Systems (APs)

APs is able to integrate the management and operation of parking spaces with the current technological advancements. This will further solve the problems encountered by car owners in the parking process, such as parking difficulties, difficulty in finding a car, slow lane, payment problems, etc. This system can provide more parking spaces with limited space compared to traditional car parks. Accordingly, this system enables real-time data sharing, parking reservation and navigation functions, which can help reduce traffic flow on the road.

According to the announcement of the Transport Department in 2019, a total of six pilot projects are being planned for the construction, operation and management of different kinds of intelligent parking systems. The four pilot sites are: the Tsuen Wan short-term tenancy site, the open space at the junction of Yen Chow Street and Tung Chau Street in Sham Shui Po, and the two proposed government building sites at Chung Kong Road and Sheung Mau Street in Chai Wan. The other two sites will be announced later. It is expected that two of the sites under the pilot project will provide about 450 parking spaces.

However, the APs is mainly related to mechanical devices, such as the "electronic flying carpet" system developed by research and development enterprises in recent years, but there is no express provision under the existing Roads and Traffic Ordinance regulating such mobile mechanical devices. Furthermore, APs car parks will increase the traffic flow in the surrounding areas, therefore, during peak hours, people might need to queue up for the parking space and vehicles pick-ups while waiting for the devices. This will create queues on the roads outside the entrances and exits of the car parks. Does the government have any plan to coordinate the relevant measures?

We suggest that under this pilot project, the Government should actively coordinate with various departments, industries and stakeholders to expedite the project with an open mind. Under the premise of safety, the Government should avoid unnecessary



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regulations and restrictions.

Solution (2)

Full implementation of Smart Parking Mobile Application

A complete set of parking application can help car owners to locate nearby free parking spaces quickly, reducing and easing traffic on the road, as it is located in a busy economic activity center. In addition, it can help those who are unfamiliar with the areas to find a parking space shortly, thus reducing the waiting time for car owners. This will not only reduce the possibility of illegal parking, but also allocate resource properly. Although the Transport Department launched the "HKeMobility" application more than two years ago, it lacks of real-time information on car parks and parking metered spaces, which makes the application not widely used.

With reference to our neighbour, Macao SAR government has been using a similar application for many years, and has made it mandatory for privately managed car parks to disclose real-time data about their parking spaces, which is effective in reducing the traffic flow caused by vehicles looking for parking spaces. It is also a great convenience to the motorists.

We recommend the Hong Kong SAR Government to set up a parking database as soon as possible and follow the practice of the Macao SAR Government to implement a mandatory requirement for privately-managed car parks to disclose real-time data on parking spaces to facilitate the implementation of parking programs, thereby reducing unnecessary traffic flow on the road and optimizing the use of car park space in various districts.

Conclusion

The problem of inadequate parking spaces has been haunting motorists for more than 15 years, which is attributed to the mismatch between the government's transport and housing policies. According to the above figures, the population of the New Territories has increased from 3.6 million in 2009 to nearly 4 million in 2019, with a cumulative population growth of 338,000 or 9.47%, which is 1.66% higher than the overall population growth of 7.81%. In addition, statistics indicates that the local median monthly income has increased from \$17,500 in 2009 to \$28,700 in 2019, with an



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average increment of 64%.

In the New Territories, the median monthly income per household increased from \$15,800 in 2009 to \$28,800 in 2019, with an average increment over 80%, which is 16% more than the local increment. Obviously, the New Territories (particularly in the newly developed areas) public transportation network failed to cope with the mass migration of people to the north, part of them are the increasing middle class families that have potential to purchase private cars for daily commuting.

The demand for private cars is therefore on the upward trend. The number of valid private car licences increased from 424,393 in 2008 to 624,999 in 2019, representing an increase of 200,000 or 47%, and accounting for nearly 60% of the total population of 338,000 who migrated northward. This is a strong evidence showing the migration of the labour force to the north has directly increased the demand for the New Territories' transport network, but the government has not made corresponding policies and developments to meet this huge demand.

For the middle class, in particular, the significant increase in the number of private car users has been a direct result of their need to use private cars for daily commuting when the public transport network is unable to cope with their migration to the north. Under the influence of the housing policy, private cars are nowadays mainly used as a means of transportation for the public, which is completely different from the concept of traditional luxury products.

Moreover, the Government has not implemented appropriate measures to complement its housing policy, and has blindly reduced the number of parking spaces for private cars from a low of 1.46 in 2008 to a new low of 1.09 in 2019. In addition, the Government has drastically reduced the number of parking spaces in government car parks under the Transport Department (TD) from 6,871 in 2004 to 6,871 in 2019. The number of parking spaces will be reduced by 46% to 3,680, or 3,191 by 2020.

Over the years, the HKAA has continuously reflected the problem of inadequate parking spaces to the Government, but the Government has all along adopted an ostrich policy to address the problem, which has led to the deterioration of the problem. It is evident that the Government has completely ignored the views of stakeholders in its policy. Hence, the HKAA once again strongly urges the Government to compose a long-term policy and plan for the supporting facilities for private cars. Apart from speeding up the



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pace of solving the existing problems, it is also necessary to have a long-term policy to coordinate the overall housing and transport strategies, as well as to seriously reform town planning.

We suggest that in the short term, the implementation of the APSs should be expedited and implement the strategy of "single site, multiple use" model, and to mandate the disclosure of data of privately managed car parks such as their parking spaces. By doing so, this will immediately enhance the usefulness of the "HKeMobility" application developed by the Transport Department more than two years ago to provide immediate relief to the community transport network.

Meanwhile, the Government should focus on the "Park-and-Ride" scheme and reserve suitable sites and locations for "Smart Parking for Interchange" to complement the development of the surrounding road networks; at the same time, we should strive to set up a large database to implement "HKeMobility". Long-term housing, transport and town planning must have forward-looking development blueprints in order to solve the travel problems that have plagued the public and car owners for many years, and to urge the Government not to continue to adopt a piecemeal approach to solve the problems.

HKAA is committed to reflecting the voice of private car owners and suggesting feasible and effective solutions to the Government for detailed study. Regarding the shortage of parking spaces and the Because of the long-term social problems arising from it, we hope that the Government will be open-minded in examining and studying the improvement proposals put forward by us this time and take a serious look at them, so as to adopt feasible and effective policies in a proactive manner. We will continue to speak up for the 600,000 private car owners in Hong Kong and actively fight for their legitimate rights and interests.



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About The Hong Kong Automobile Association (HKAA)

The Hong Kong Automobile Association (HKAA) is the most recognized and longest established automobile organization formed in Hong Kong and has been in existence since 1918. Affiliated with more than 150 overseas motoring organizations around the world HKAA offers reciprocal services to members.

HKAA is a member of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), the Federation Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM) and the Hong Kong Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China. As the ASN (National Sporting Authority) in Hong Kong, HKAA's involvement in motorsport began in the 1950s and is the sole Association to issue race competition licenses to members. In addition to this formal role, the Association has been actively involved in the promotion of sporting events, to assist Hong Kong competitors to participate international events in other countries.

As an internationally recognized not-for-profit organization, the HKAA upholds the objectives of serving and protecting our members, serving the community, promoting road safety and motorsports development, and supporting environmental protection.

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