

14th August 2009

The Hon Donald TSANG Yam-kuen, GBM
The Chief Executive
The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Government House,
Upper Albert Road,
Central,
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Tsang,

**Your 2009 Policy Address:
Improving Cycling in the New Towns and the New Territories**

Problem

This paper considers cycling for transport and for leisure, in the New Towns where Government has provided good cycling infrastructure for transport purposes and a number of cycling tracks for leisure purposes. Government is also developing a connected cycle track from Tsuen Wan through the west and north New Territories to Sai Kung (the NT Cycle Track Network).

There is demand for better cycling facilities in New Towns such as Tin Shui Wai, where many find the cost of internal public transport too high. The cycling environment exhibits various problems – locations of cycle parking facilities may be inappropriate or inadequate; management of the parking facilities is poor; enforcement is patchy; signs for the cyclists are confusing and sometimes misleading and connectivity for cycle trips is fragmented. Users do not know how these facilities should be used safely. A number of Departments are involved in the management of cycling but none has full responsibility - further efforts to prioritise and co-ordinate their efforts may be required.

Proposal

We propose the following package to foster the use of cycling:

(a) **As a Transport mode:**

Our proposal is that Government should give priority to cycling to meet **residents' needs for a safe, convenient, sustainable and affordable mode of transport**, in particular in new towns and areas with good cycling infrastructure base. The objective would be to provide for short internal trips, feeder trips and leisure trips. To this end, Government may:

- (i) Designate a lead Bureau to oversee the concerned departments to develop a programme to improve cycling arrangements in the New Towns;
- (ii) Strengthen the role of cycling in the New Towns within the following framework:
 - Improved connectivity, parking, signage and other facilities



- Better provision and management of parking
 - Improved safety education and training
 - Effective enforcement
- (iii) Implement the above framework as a programme to ensure that any action taken suits the actual situations and needs of each locality, and lessons learned in one area can be transferred to another. Two pilot areas might be Tin Shui Wai and Tseung Kwan O;
- (iv) Consider contracting out the management of cycling facilities.

(b) **For leisure purposes:**

- (i) Ensure that the NT Cycle Track Network is designed to blend in with the environment as far as possible;
- (ii) Ensure that management of the NT Cycle Track Network is coherent and user friendly, with a particular focus on safety;
- (iii) Ensure that adequate facilities are provided for learner cyclists to get better training, preferably prior to cycling on the Cycle Track Network.

Further details on our proposals are in the Appendix. Engaging the stakeholders groups is vital in the implementation process.

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong (CILTHK)

CILTHK is the professional body for those engaged in various sectors of transport and logistics, including air, sea and land, for both passenger and freight movement. The membership is around 1,900.

We hope you will find the above suggestions of interest and worth pursuing. We would appreciate the opportunity to call on you to explain our ideas further.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. Wong Sze-chun
President
The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong

1. CYCLING AS A TRANSPORT MODE

(I) Illustrative Problem: Cycling in Tin Shui Wai

A cycling study was conducted in Tin Shui Wai (TSW) in 2008/09, on the basis of interviews and direct site and cyclist behavioural observations. The study was carried out by Worcester Polytechnic University students visiting the HK Polytechnic University.

Of the 247 cyclists interviewed, about 70% made cycling trips for transport purposes. About one-third of respondents perceived public transport in TSW as unaffordable. Those who chose not to cycle did so mainly because of safety and parking security concerns, and the difficulty of cycling as a mode of transport.

(II) Major Findings from the Study

(a) Connectivity, parking and other facilities

- (i) A number of **disconnections of cycle tracks** were identified at junctions, requiring cyclists to dismount, and increasing the possibility of conflict with pedestrian traffic and of accidents. Pedestrians and cyclists were also found using each other's tracks, with consequent conflicts between the two.
- (ii) A **shortage of parking spaces, and consequent illegal parking** was identified at popular locations such as Light Rail Transit (LRT) stations, residential areas, commercial locations and shopping areas while a large number of **empty spaces** were observed at West Rail stations, and some spaces were even inaccessible.
- (iii) **Poorly designed or maintained facilities and obstacles** were observed on cycle tracks, including uneven road surfaces, excessive sign posts, unnecessary bollards and trashcans. These interfered with cyclists' ability to safely use the tracks. In addition, some of the necessary signage along cycle tracks was unclear, obscured, or missing.

(b) Poor management of parking spaces

- (i) Many of the parking spaces were occupied by **obstructions and abandoned cycles**. About 36% of the observed parked cycles appeared to be abandoned.

(c) Safety education and training

- (i) Of the 247 cyclists interviewed about 7% reported that they had received cycling education or training. More frequent cycling users were found to have received more training.
- (ii) Both the survey and on-site observations revealed a significant portion of cyclists violated cycling regulations. Major reasons for this included **not being aware of the relevant regulations**.

(d) Effective enforcement

As noted above, **safety concerns** deterred many from cycling. In addition, there was conflict of movements between pedestrians and cyclists. Enforcement was limited.

Government has made various good efforts to deal with the problems noted above. We are aware of ongoing efforts to refine the design standards of facilities (bollards, signage), to clear unused cycles, to raise safety awareness through publicity



campaigns. However these efforts tend to be piece-meal, and only implemented from time to time without any overall guiding framework.

(III) Our proposals

In sum, **our proposal** is that Government should give **priority to developing cycling as a form of transport** to meet residents' needs for a **safe, convenient, sustainable and affordable** mode of transport, in particular in new towns and areas with good cycling infrastructure base. The objective would be to provide for:

- short trips within the New Towns, for shopping or other purposes
- feeder trips to public transport services
- leisure trips, connecting where possible with the NT Cycle Track network

To this end, government should:

(a) Designate a lead Bureau to oversee the concerned departments to develop a programme to improve cycling arrangements in the New Towns.

A number of departments are involved in efforts to provide for cycling, including Transport, Home Affairs, the Police. In an ad hoc way, these departments already cooperate at the district level.

Our proposal is that a lead Bureau be appointed to develop the framework and programme suggested below, to provide oversight, guidance and coordination to the efforts of departments, and to ensure that a rolling programme of work is implemented, with resource and other problems addressed as necessary.

(b) Strengthen the role of cycling in the New Towns within the following framework:

- (i) Improved connectivity, parking and other facilities;
- (ii) Better management of parking;
- (iii) Improved safety through education and training;
- (iv) More effective enforcement; and

(c) Implement the above framework as a programme to ensure that any action taken suits the actual situations and needs of each locality, and lessons learned in one area can be transferred to another. Two pilot areas might be Tin Sui Wai and Tseung Kwan O.

We propose that the lead Bureau appoint consultants to develop the above framework into a coherent plan for each new Town. The plan should provide for

- Ambitious development of the existing cycling networks
- Improvements in the areas covered by the framework noted above
- Institutionalised on-going management of the framework, probably under a Cycling Network Management Committee for each New Town
- Arrangements to refurbish and resell any abandoned cycles seized as part of ongoing management arrangements
- A special focus on safety, including how education and training might be further developed including the use of model "cycle safety towns" where students can learn about cycling safety

(d) Consider contracting out management of cycling facilities

We have noted above that management tends to be fragmented and ad hoc. This in part reflects competing priorities within departments, and between departments.

In devising management arrangements to implement the new framework, **we propose** the consultants should consider the extent to which such tasks should be contracted out, and how such arrangements should be made.

2. CYCLING FOR LEISURE PURPOSES

(I) The NT Cycle Track Network

We welcome the planned NT Cycle Track Network. The concept is imaginative, and the plans for the network and the facilities to be included are generally fine.

(II) Our proposals

In sum, our **proposals** are to make the network **blend in with the local environment** so far as possible, and to ensure **good quality management** arrangements which will provide users with a great cycling experience.

(a) Ensure that the NT Cycle Track Network is designed to blend in with the environment as far as possible

Our proposal is that all the best practices developed in HK should be applied to the construction of the Cycle Track Network, including:

- Design of the kiosks and hiring areas
- Selection of the vegetation and trees (which should be local and not exotic)
- Construction of the track itself which should not be a concrete ribbon, rather it allows grass to grow over as much of the area as possible

(b) Ensure that management of the NT Cycle Track Network is coherent and user friendly, with a particular focus on safety; and

(c) Ensure that adequate facilities are provided for learner cyclists to get better training, preferably prior to cycling on the Cycle Track Network.

Our proposal is to provide for comprehensive management under one organisation, preferably within the private sector. Since leisure cyclists may be less practiced, there should be a focus on safety. Such management should include:

- Operation of the kiosks and hiring areas
- Maintenance of the entire track
- Provision of appropriate training and education to cyclists
- First response aid to those in need of assistance