

Autonomous Vehicle Trial Scheme in North Lantau

Purpose

This paper aims to brief the Islands District Council (“IsDC”) on the latest progress of autonomous vehicle (“AV”) trial scheme by Baidu Apollo International Limited (“Baidu”) in North Lantau and update IsDC Members on its extension plan.

Background

2. The Government has been promoting the development of AVs in Hong Kong in an active and orderly manner through a multi-pronged approach by providing policy support, regulatory backing and financial subsidy. As set out by the Chief Executive in the **2025 Policy Address**, three areas will be approved in 2025 for AV trials, aiming at AV cross-district travel and connections to other modes of transport, to accelerate the large-scale development of driverless autonomous driving in Hong Kong, expediting its transition to commercial operations. We will continue to enhance the relevant technical standards under the principle of traffic safety assurance.

3. Since 2017, the Transport Department (“TD”) has been issuing "Movement Permits" in accordance with the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) to facilitate AV trials by the industry. With a view to facilitate the AV technology development, as highlighted in the Policy Address, the Government has established a regulatory framework for AVs by amending the Road Traffic Ordinance and enacting the Road Traffic (Autonomous Vehicles) Regulation in

May 2023 and January 2024 respectively. The new regulatory regime for AVs came into effect on 1 March 2024. Simultaneously, the TD issued the Code of Practice for Trial and Pilot Use of Autonomous Vehicles (“the CoP”), setting out detailed technical, safety and operational requirements for trial and use of AVs. The Government attaches great importance to road safety and will continue to promote the development of AVs in Hong Kong in an orderly and safe manner.

4. The new legislation has high degree of flexibility to accommodate the rapid-evolving autonomous driving technology, which aims to drive technological breakthroughs, enhance efficiency, and expedite the approval process. The TD makes reference to the applicants’ trial performance results achieved in Hong Kong and other regions, suitably modifies or exempts traffic provisions that are not applicable to AVs, while ensuring road safety and balancing innovation with public interest. To ensure safety, the TD has also implemented various measures, including stringent vehicle examinations, mandatory insurance requirements, and progressive enhancement of technology in terms of its complexity and challenges. This framework facilitates the industry in conducting wider AV trials and use in Hong Kong in a flexible manner.

Progress of AV Trial in North Lantau and Other Areas

5. Since December 2024, Baidu has commenced the AV trial project on Airport Island in North Lantau. Under the TD's continuous monitoring and facilitation, the AV trial has achieved four notable technical advancements, namely the simultaneous operation of multiple vehicles, passenger-carrying trials, expanded routes and increased vehicle speeds. In June 2025, the TD approved Baidu to conduct trials in the Tung Chung community. During the trial, Baidu has strictly complied with relevant Hong Kong laws, the Code of Practice, and conditions attached to pilot licenses and AV certificates. The AVs have met the safety mileage/duration requirements for every testing stages and proved suitable

for road use. No major incident or traffic congestion occurred during the trials.

6. Furthermore, the TD also approved Baidu in August and October 2025 to conduct trials in Cyberport in Southern District and Kowloon East respectively. The projects have largely been running smooth to date. During the trial period, trained in-vehicle backup operators are stationed on the AVs to take over their control whenever necessary. To date, the trial operation has been generally smooth as the AVs demonstrated stable performance when navigating and sharing different road scenarios with other vehicles, achieving highly automated driving (level 4 under national and international standards). This means the vehicles can continuously perform all dynamic driving tasks under specific operational conditions and automatically execute minimal risk strategies, a technical level comparable to that of Chinese Mainland and other parts of the world.

7. Given the smooth operations and stable performance in North Lantau and other trial areas, Baidu now plans to further expand its trial scheme in North Lantau. These include connecting the Airport Island and Tung Chung town centre, expanding trial routes within Tung Chung, and further extending to Sunny Bay. The project aims to achieve the following breakthroughs:

- (1) Cross-district operation;
- (2) Simultaneous trial operation across multiple districts;
- (3) Increasing the number of vehicles operating simultaneously in the same area;
- and
- (4) Launching the longest AV trial route in Hong Kong (Airport Island to Sunny Bay).

8. This expansion is one of the three cross-district AV projects mentioned in

the Policy Address. The TD will exercise stringent control with a view to promoting AV trials and development in Hong Kong, laying the foundation for future AV operation with only remote backup operators ("remotely-operated AV").

9. The Baidu's report in Annex provides a detailed update on the experience and progress of trial in Airport Island and Tung Chung since the meeting with Members in May 2025, and outlines the planned expansion plan in North Lantau.

Advice Sought

10. Members' views and support are sought please on above AV trial scheme of Baidu.

Transport Department

13 January 2026