

(Translation)

Mr Chan Fu-ming
Chairman to the Traffic and Transport Committee of Southern District Council
G/F & 1/F, Ocean Court
3 Aberdeen Praya Road, Aberdeen

Proposed agenda item for the 18th TTC meeting on 10th November 2014:

Request for Government Departments and Transport Operators to Step up Measures to Prevent High Capacity Passenger Vehicles Falling off Roadside Slopes

Dear Chairman and Members,

Major roads in the Southern District linking Repulse Bay, Stanley, Tai Tam and Shek O are narrow and winding with frequent gradients. High slopes and cliffs along roadsides are generally in lack of adequate containment measures. This problem is also found on Pok Fu Lam Road and Victoria Road. During the night of 30th August this year, two private cars collided head-on at a bend on the dam of Tai Tam Tuk Reservoir, causing the detachment of sections of the stone sidewall. This shows that even relatively solid walls in reality cannot sustain larger impacts.

These roads are busy with daily traffic reaching 19,000 vehicles on some sections of Repulse Bay Road. It is estimated that the daily two-way flow of high capacity passenger vehicles i.e. public buses, minibuses, school buses and coaches approaches 2,000 on Repulse Bay Road between Island Road and Chung Hom Kok Road. Professional drivers are familiar with the road conditions, but may not be aware of technical weaknesses of these roads. Some drivers adopt excessive speeds which could lead to loss-of-control, skidding or head-on collisions and in turn running off the road pavement.

Accidents with high capacity passenger vehicles falling over steep roadsides are not common in Hong Kong, but any such happenings will be catastrophic. This requires stakeholders to recognize the problem and strive to minimize the risks. We now propose that:

1. Transport Department commences discussions with transport operators as soon as possible to formulate stricter rules of operation. These should cover information for drivers about high risk road sections and setting up specific driving standards with guidelines on appropriate speeds. This should also include effective monitoring and management using any currently available in-vehicle GPS equipment and vehicle recorders. Along certain high risk road sections, large passenger vehicles will have to drop their speeds to 25 to 40km/h, depending on the actual circumstances. It is inappropriate to purely use the default 50km/h legal speed limit as the basis for operation.
2. Transport Department, Highways Department and the Civil Engineering and Development Department should discuss to develop a program to increase the containment capability of barriers along hilly roads in the Southern District, and to systematically implement various measures to improve road safety under the program of slope works.

Prevention of vehicles falling off high slopes is an important component for increasing the safety and quality of roads in the SDC. We shall be pleased to collaborate with the District Council, Government departments and transport operators to provide information on hazardous roadside slopes and potential counter-measures.



Kwong Tse Hin, Julian
Co-opted Member
Traffic and Transport Committee, Southern District Council
13 October 2014



Paul Zimmerman
District Councillor

Illustration of Typical Problems

(Source : Google Street View)



A narrow section of Tai Tam Road (Red Hill to Stanley) adjacent to a 20m high sea cliff. The stone wall does not have the capability to resist impact by buses and coaches at general speeds.



Bend on Tai Tam Tuk Dam. The collision between two private cars on 30 August 2014 resulted in the detachment of sections of the stone wall. This clearly indicates that the wall cannot withstand impacts by buses and coaches. Some double decker drivers adopt excessive speeds on the straight sections, presumably in an attempt to reduce the waiting time of opposing vehicles. Observation has been made in a bus with its speedometer showing 60km/h over the dam. In order to control the risk of accidents, travel speeds of buses and coaches have to be regulated to not more than 35km/h.



A section of Repulse Bay Road over a 20m high steep side slope.



A 100m long section of Victoria Road over a cliff