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Advisory members express praise for plan

TWO members of the Transport Advisory Committee praised the White Paper on transport policy issued yesterday, but said they had reservations over some points.

The White Paper outlines a series of traffic management measures aimed at containing growth in the number of vehicles in Hongkong and making efficient use of the territory's limited road space.

TAC member Mr Man Sai-cheong said the Government should adopt a flexible and practical approach in implementing the measure contained in the White Paper.

"The Government must maintain the general direction (of the White Paper) while being practical," Mr Man said.

The measures should not be treated as "rigid individual policies", but should fit in with the macro-economic and social framework of Hongkong, Mr Man said.

The White Paper recalled that increases in taxes and licence fees had proved effective in 1982 in regulating the growth in the number of private cars.

The peak figure of 193,000 private cars in that year has never been reached since. In August last year there were 173,900 private cars.

The White Paper suggested that tax measures could also be employed to reduce the growth rate of light goods vehicles, particularly those put to both commercial and private use.



■ Mr Cheng ... use high technology.

The White Paper also outlines plans to introduce laws prohibiting medium and heavy goods vehicles from using the outside lanes of carriageways that have three or more lanes.

Mr Man said these measures should be regarded as secondary to



■ Mr Man ... flexible approach.

posals, but said the Government should consider carefully the size of any increases in vehicle registration taxes and licence fees.

The rate should be high enough to contain vehicle growth but not so high as to be a burden to transport operators, he said.

Vehicle growth must be contained to ensure Hongkong's traffic volume did not outstrip the expansion of its infrastructure in the next decades, Mr Cheng said.

He felt the Government had been right to retain area pricing as a possible long-term option, since, given the rapid development of modern technology, it could be used to make optimum use of road space.

More high technology should be used to deal with Hongkong's traffic congestion, he said.

Dr Timothy Hau, lecturer of economics at the University of Hongkong and a member of the Chartered Institute of Transport (Hongkong Section), said that in the meantime, road pricing was an effective means of curbing traffic congestion.

He suggested using the revenue generated by road pricing schemes to set up a fund to subsidise infrastructural transport projects.

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— Transport Advisory Committee member Mr Man Sai-cheong

the primary task of providing sufficient and effective transport networks.

The Government should conduct thorough consultation and research before adopting the measures, he said, and even when implemented they should be reviewed regularly to ensure changing social factors were taken into account.

Mr Man felt the area pricing policy, which has been shelved for the moment, should be retained as a possible future option.

A second TAC member, Mr Stephen Cheng, gave his broad support to the White Paper pro-