

Northeast Asia Regional Program



Li Yang | Beijing, CHINA
Deputy Director General, General Office, Ministry of Transport

Recently promoted to Deputy Director General, Li Yang focuses on transportation development strategy and policy-making, as well as transportation economics and governance. He previously served as Vice President with the China Academy of Transport Science (CATS) and director of the CATS Transportation Development Research Center. While on fellowship, Mr. Li examined American strategies to control traffic congestion to aid his work with anti-congestion measures in Beijing, and studied best practices in transportation development strategy, policy and governance.

Visits to a range of large and mid-sized cities afforded Mr. Li the opportunity to gain perspectives on the varied transit situations and challenges confronting these cities. He stated "I found that many U.S. cities are suffering from the traffic congestion as in China, and that policies, strategies, plans and actions have been implemented to resolve this problem. All the persons that I met in the U.S. totally agreed to take actions to release traffic congestions. In Washington, D.C., the U.S. Department of Transportation had issued strategies and action plan to improve interstate highway service at the federal level. In the San Francisco bay area, a regional plan had been implemented. In North Carolina and Virginia, cashless toll roads and lanes will be open soon."

He also observed, however, "that it was difficult to achieve consensus when we discussed how to deal with traffic congestion... From my point of view, I agreed that the problem of traffic congestion cannot be resolved by transport itself. It can be resolved not only by increasing the capacity of the transportation network, but also by management of transportation demand, by improvement of city planning and land use, and by the strong support of the public. I found some good examples in this trip. Whether in San Francisco and Raleigh, or in New York City and Washington, D.C., public transit systems are being improved, the concept of transport oriented plan (TOD), HOV and HOT lanes, pedestrian plaza and parklet, car share and cashless toll roads were introduced and conducted, the charge of parking and entering the urban area were more flexible according to the demand of transport. All these policies will be positive to release traffic congestion."

Complementing his professional meetings, Mr. Li enjoyed the opportunity to meet USA Fellows throughout his travels, including in St. Louis, where he had a "first-time experience in the U.S. We cooked Chinese food with an American family when a USA Fellow invited us to have dinner at her house. We cooked together, watched a baseball game, and talked around the table like one big family. At that moment I had the feeling like in my home. It is amazing." After experiencing the strength of the fellowship network, he is committed to hosting Fellows in China, participating in the development of the Chinese EF Alumni network, and contributing to the EF brand name development.

As a result of his fellowship, Mr. Li will build on his meetings with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration in preparation for meetings in 2012 in St. Louis as part of the Sino-U.S. Transportation Forum. Memos of cooperation will be explored between research institutions in China's Ministry of Transport of China and several institutions, including the World Resources Institute, the John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, the UC-Berkeley Center for Future Urban Transport, and CUNY's University Transportation Research Center. Additionally, he invited the American Public Transit Association, American Association of State Highway Transportation Officers, and a commercial delegation from North Carolina to attend the May 2012 Transportation Exhibition being held in Beijing. Mr. Li concluded, "After the EF trip, I think that the communication and cooperation in transportation industry between China and U.S. should be enhanced because we face so many common challenges, such as traffic congestion, CO2 reduction, and sustainable development."

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