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For Discussion

YTMDC TTC
Paper No.: 1/2001

Bus Route Development Programme 2002-03
Yau Tsim Mong District

Purpose

This paper elaborates the Bus Route Development Programme (RDP) for 2002 in respect of Yau Tsim Mong (YTM) District and seeks Members' comments on the Programme for 2003.

2002 Bus Route Development Programme

2. We had consulted Members on the 2002 Bus Route Development Programme on 18 January 2001. After taking into consideration Members' opinions and other related factors, the 2002 RDP has been developed as shown in Annex 1 for reference.

3. The items of 2002 RDP for YTM District are listed below:

(1) Measures to improve the services

KMB proposed to introduce 64 items of service enhancement in YTM District, such as improvement of frequency and deployment of air-conditioned buses, etc to cater for passengers' needs.

(2) Measures to rationalize bus routes and Bus-bus interchange programme

To provide more efficient service in YMT district and improve traffic condition along Nathan Road, bus company proposed to introduce bus route rationalization and BBI schemes on the following bus routes:

- KMB 6A <-> KMB 2A/6/6C (Please refer to Annex 1.1)
- KMB 203 <-> KMB 6/35A (Please refer to Annex 1.2)
- KMB 208 <-> KMB 7/81C (Please refer to Annex 1.3)

- KMB 224X <-> KMB 215X/219X (Please refer to Annex 1.4)
- KMB 32 <-> 31B/36B (Please refer to Annex 1.5)
- KMB 72 <-> 31B (Please refer to Annex 1.6)

2003 Bus Route Development Programme

4. The proposals for 2003 YTM District RDP are shown in Annex 2. KMB proposed to introduce 18 items of service enhancement in YTM District, such as improvement of frequency and deployment of air-conditioned buses, etc to cater for passengers' needs

RDP planning considerations

5. We will continue to develop the bus route network in accordance with the Hong Kong Long Term Transport Strategy which is listed as follows:

- (1) Railways are environmentally friendly and efficient mass carriers. It is the Government's transport policy to develop of railways as the backbone of Hong Kong's transport system. Therefore, we will promote maximum utilization of railways supplemented by feeder services of other public transport modes. We will also continue to encourage franchised bus companies to improve the quality of their services. Bus service will continue to play an important role in public transport system, particularly for areas not accessible by railways. As for other public transport modes, they will continue to play a complementary role to railways and franchised bus services;
- (2) Public transport services will be provided in an environmentally acceptable manner to ensure the sustainable development of Hong Kong. We will as far as possible introduce appropriate measures to mitigate the environmental impact of transport activities; and
- (3) To reduce congestion, we will further improve the public transport network, carry out effective intermodal coordination, rationalize services to match the demand, and avoid unhealthy competition and duplication of routes.

6. In the next few years, the railway network of Hong Kong will keep on expanding. In 2002-2007, 6 railway projects will be completed as follows:

- Tseung Kwan O MTR Extension (to be completed in 2002)
- West Rail (to be completed in 2003)
- Ma On Shan Railway (to be completed in 2004)
- East Rail Tsim Sha Tsui Extension (to be completed in 2004)
- Penny's Bay Rail Link (to be completed in 2005)
- Sheung Shui - Lok Ma Chau Extension (to be completed in 2007)

The completion of these railways will bring 63% of Hong Kong's population and 71% of our working population into the railway catchment area within walking distance to the railway stations. This will lead to a significant change in travel pattern of the public. Moreover, the new railways will provide greater passenger capacity and more effective public transport services. More feeder links to the railway stations will be needed while the demand for bus routes duplicating the railway will decline. By then, rationalization of the bus network will be required.

The principles of preparing RDP

7. TD and the franchised bus companies will apply the following principles in preparation of RDP:

- (1) Basically, the major developed areas over the territory are served with one or more than one bus routes and other complementary transport modes, such as GMB. To cope with the increase of population, we will adjust the frequency in accordance with the existing passenger demand for bus service. For individual routes, if the passenger capacity within the busiest half hour and that one hour during rush hours is 100% and 85% respectively, or 60% within the busiest half hour during the normal hours, we will consider to provide additional vehicles for the routes;
- (2) In the case of bus routes with low passenger volume, we will implement different measures to enhance their efficiency in accordance with the operation of individual route. These measures include adjusting the existing routes, frequency and schedule, shortening the

bus journeys and cutting the number of bus-stops in certain areas to an appropriate level. For individual routes, if the utilization rate of the busiest half hour during rush periods is below 85%, we will consider reducing number of vehicles for the routes. However, bus routes providing railway feeder service, meeting social demand and of a frequency below 15 minutes during rush hours will be considered on individual merits.

- (3) Apart from adjustments in individual bus routes, we will also implement strategic route rationalization plans; e.g. reducing the number of buses passing through Tsim Sha Tsui, Central, Wanchai, Causeway Bay and other busy districts and better coordination of public transport services upon the completion of new railways. In addition to improving the overall operation effectiveness of bus network, these plans also help to improve the environment in Hong Kong, such as alleviating congestion, vehicle emission and noise problems in these areas.
- (4) If demand cannot be met by adjustments in existing routes and no feasible alternative transport services are available, we will consider introducing new bus routes in response to demand. New bus services providing feeder services to railways or operating outside the railway catchment will be given high priority. Conveniently located bus interchange facilities will be provided to reduce duplication generated by “point-to-point” bus services. We will give careful consideration to these factors when approving new bus routes. We will also take into account the impact of new routes on the congested trunk roads. In designing new routeings, we will try our best to avoid long haul bus routes or new routes passing through busy districts such as Tsim Sha Tsui, Central, Wanchai and Causeway Bay. If such new routes have to pass through the above districts, an equal number of bus trips of other bus routes passing through the districts has to be reduced accordingly.
- (5) In order to improve the quality of services and meet passenger demand, the franchised bus companies have included air-conditioning, Octopus system, low-floor entrance/exit, environmentally friendly engine and 2 x 2 seating as standard facilities on their new buses.

- (6) We will encourage bus companies to provide additional interchanges for railway or other bus routes at appropriate and feasible locations so that passengers can travel to different destinations with concessionary fares, the demand for long haul and direct “point-to-point” bus services will be reduced and the road space in Hong Kong and bus resources are utilized in an efficient way to enhance the efficiency of bus network.

8. Moreover, in considering the RDP, TD and the franchised bus companies will also take into account the following factors:

- (1) the existing and planned public transport services in the district;
- (2) the development of the district;
- (3) the completion of transport infrastructure;
- (4) the benefit of the item to passengers;
- (5) the impact of the item on traffic congestion and the environment;
- (6) the impact of the item on the operator;
- (7) the impact of the item on other operators;
- (8) the cost-effectiveness of the item; and
- (9) public complaints and suggestions.

Tseung Kwan O MTR Extension (TKE)

9. TKE Phase I, which will be completed and opened by the end of 2002, will provide an environmentally friendly, reliable and fast mass transit carrier to the Tseung Kwan O and Yau Tong residents. TKE Phase I will link Po Lam Station in Tseung Kwan O and North Point Station on the Island with 5 stations in-between, namely Hang Hau, Tseung Kwan O, Tiu Keng Leng, Yau Tong and Quarry Bay Stations. By then, nearly 80% of the population in Tseung Kwan O new town and residents of the housing estates near Yau Tong MTR Station will be within walking distance to a nearby MTR station.

10. The opening of TKE will substantially increase the total capacity of public transport along the TKE corridor and significantly reduce the journey time to Kowloon and HKI from Tseung Kwan O. Compared with the existing bus services, the journey time to Kwun Tong will be reduced from 18 to 11 minutes, to Mongkok from 50 to 30 minutes and to Central from 60 to 25 minutes. According to the

information of MTRC, the fares of TKE will be competitive and its area pricing structure will be generally similar to those of the other MTR routes.

11. It is expected that a majority of the passengers in Tseung Kwan O and some passengers in Kwun Tong using the existing transport services will switch to TKE, which will help alleviate the congestion in Tseung Kwan O Tunnel. Besides, passengers going to the Kwun Tong Line at present will also switch to TKE. Hence, the demand for feeder services connecting MTR stations will also change.

12. To cater for these changes and to provide good railway feeder services, TD is developing plans to alter the bus and GMB services networks along the TKE corridor upon the commissioning of TKE. Apart from ensuring the efficiency and coordination of the public transport system, these plans provide comprehensive feeder services to the various stations along TKE. TD will consult the YTMDC TTC and the parties concerned on the plans shortly.

Other Supplementary Services

13. The major function of GMB is to supplement mass transit carriers by providing connecting services to railway stations and bus termini in new towns and villages, and serving areas where patronage is not high enough for the provision of services by high capacity carriers or it is not cost-effective for buses to operate or subject to constraints in road conditions.

14. Residents' services (RS) perform a supplementary role in our public transport system, mainly in supplementing the franchised bus and GMB services during peak hours to help meet demand. Most of these routes provide services to the central business districts that already experience very busy traffic, thereby aggravating traffic congestion in these areas. Indeed, with the expansion of the railway network, improvements in the franchised bus services and the development of various modes of public transport, uncontrolled growth in RS cannot be permitted. In line with the transport policy of effective coordination between various modes of transport and in order to help relieve road congestion at the busy districts:

- We will give priority to GMB in areas where passenger demand is not large enough for the provision of services by buses to provide feeder services to railway stations;

- RS will continue to play a supplementary role and the existing restrictions imposed on the licensing and operation of RS will be enforced.
- As regards service areas, appropriate restrictions on RS to busy districts such as Tsim Sha Tsui, Central, Wanchai and Causeway Bay will be imposed;
- Approval will not be granted to new long haul RS or RS to these busy areas unless it is necessary and there are no alternative means of public transport for passengers;
- As regards the existing RS in the above mentioned areas, TD will consider, on the basis of the actual needs, whether renewal of their licenses should be approved upon expiry and the duration of the validity period; and
- Consideration will be given to peak hour RS routes that serve as feeder to railway stations where passenger demand during peak hours cannot be met by the franchised buses and GMB.

Advice Sought

15. Members are requested to note the 2002 RDP and express their views on the 2003 programme.

Transport Department
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