Bus Rationalization in Hong Kong

Presented by
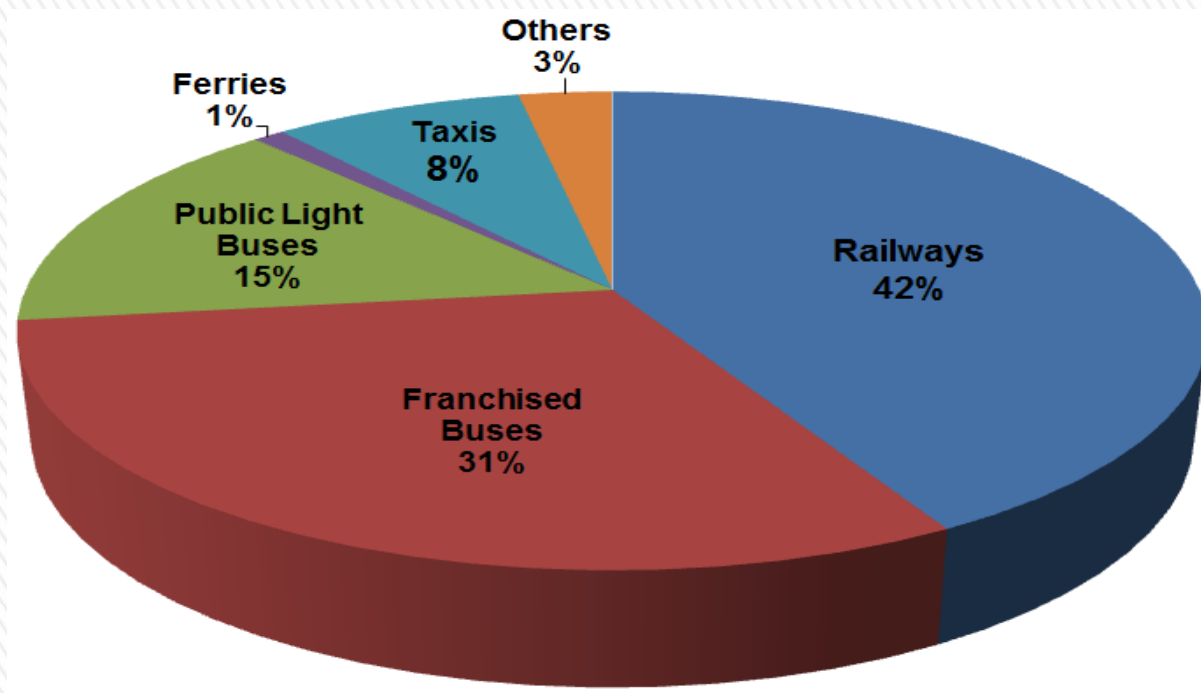Janice Lai, Transport Department, HKSAR

Basic Information of Public Transport in Hong Kong (As at 31 Dec 2015)

Population: 7.32 million
Area: 1,104 square kilometres
Average Daily Public Transport Passenger Journeys: 12.6 million

Bus Rationalization

» Aims of bus rationalization

> Enhance the efficiency of public transport network

> Provide reasonable modal choices

> Alleviate road congestion and roadside emission

> Ensure the sustainability of different public transport services

» Means of bus rationalization

Means	Guiding Principles
Reduction of bus trips along busy corridors	No net increase in number of bus trips along busy corridors
Frequency Reduction	Average occupancy rate 1) < 85% during the busiest 30 mins in the peak hours; or 2) < 30% during off-peak hours
Route Cancellation / amalgamation/ truncation	1) Headway at 15 mins or above in peak hours and at 30 mins or above in off-peak hours; and 2) Average occupancy rate in the busiest 1 hour < 50%
Route Truncation	1) Not more than 30% passengers should be affected 2) Appropriate interchange arrangement should be provided

Procedures for Conducting Bus Rationalization

» Two ways for conducting the bus rationalization:

> Bus Route Planning Programme (prepared annually)

> Other mild adjustment (small changes of timetables / stopping points / routings)

» Bus Route Planning Programme

> Consultation papers for each of the 18 districts in Hong Kong

> Public consultation (District Council Meeting + lobbying)

> Conclusion

» Other mild adjustments

> Public consultation is not required

> TD to endorse/reject bus companies' proposals

Key Players and their Goals

Public
- Convenient bus network
- Regular and reliable bus services
- Affordable fare

Politicians
- Seize votes in the respective districts

Bus Co.
- Improve profitability (redeploy resources from loss-making routes to profitable ones)
- Improve brand name

TD
- Improve efficiency and sustainability of public transport network
- Provide reasonable modal choices
- Alleviate road congestion and emission

Obstacles – Conflicts of Goals

Means of bus rationalization	Obstacles
Reduction of bus trips along busy corridors	Support - Alleviate road congestion and emission (TD)
	Object - Lower bus companies' fare revenue in short run (Bus Co.) - Cause inconvenience to passengers (Public)
Frequency Reduction; Route Cancellation / Amalgamation Route Truncation	Support - Improve efficiency and sustainability of bus network (TD) - Better allocation of bus resources (Bus Co.)
	Object - Cause inconvenience to passengers (Public)

Roles of politicians:
- Reflect the voters' view within a specific district
- Limited guiding effect

Strategies

» Reduction of bus trips along busy corridors

 > Emphasize the improvement of bus service reliability when the road congestion is relieved

  • Number of trips reduced may be provided to support the argument

 > Provide detailed information of the alternative services

 > The trips reduced will be redeployed to strengthen the service of high demand routes

» Frequency Reduction

 > Point out how the resources are redeployed

  • The number of passengers benefits from such redeployment > adversely affected passengers

 > The frequency reduction sometimes allows passengers better estimate the time of arrival of buses (e.g. Peak headway from 11/12 mins to 15 mins)

Strategies

» Route Cancellation / Amalgamation / Truncation

> View as radical changes and detailed figures (e.g. occupancy rate, no. of passengers being affected) are usually required to justify the proposals.

> Provide detailed information on alternative services

- New bus-bus interchange arrangements are always preferred, so as to:

– Increase the number of alternative services to minimize passengers' waiting time during interchange;

– Lower passengers' travel expenses

Strategies

» Other Strategies

> Commencement of new bus-bus Interchange Infrastructure
- review of the bus network for an area as a whole

> Completion of new housing developments
- extension of existing routes and commencement of new routes
  – require redeployment of bus resources from low utilization routes
  – Re-routing of existing service is required to avoid excessive journey time after route extension

Achievements and Implications

» Achievements

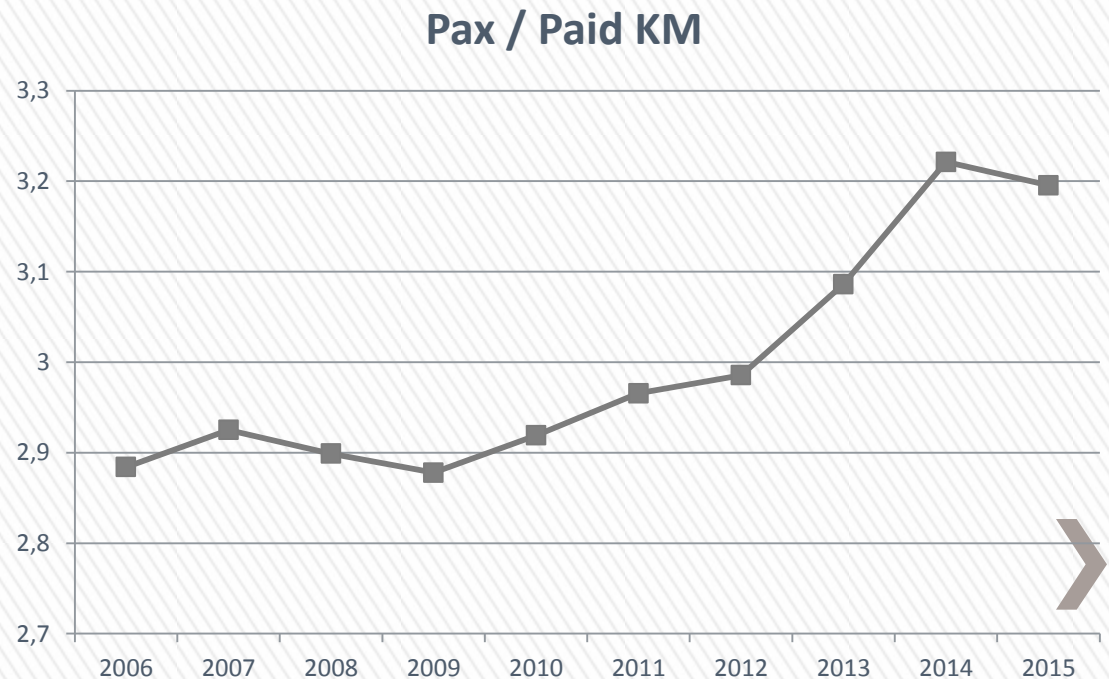> Cancellation/amalgamation of routes:

- 8 routes (2015); 62 routes (2006 – 2015)

> Frequency reduction / route truncation

- 102 routes (2015); 410 routes (2006 – 2015)

» Implications

> Increase in overall bus network efficiency during the recent 10 years

Pax / Paid KM

Thank You