Bus Rationalization in Hong Kong

Presented by
Janice Lai, Transport Department, HKSAR
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

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

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

**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
Thank You