

Bangkok Subway News 2000-2001

March 1, 2000

Categories: Subway

Demolishing Ratchada-Lad Phrao Flyover to Rebuild the New One

Dailynews, January 24, 2001

MRTA is preparing to demolish the Ratchada-Lad Phrao Flyover and rebuild a new one at the center of Ratchadaphisek Inner Ring Road since the old one violates traffic engineering principle and is not safe. Furthermore, the foot of flyover blocks the entry to the park and ride.

Mr. Praphat Jongsanguan (MRTA Director) said MRTA is cooperating with BMA and ION Joint Venture (MRTA Contractor) to demolish the Ratchada-Lad Phrao since the flyover was built without using traffic engineering principles. The flyover is on the left and right sides of the road, not at the center as other flyovers. The reason is that the flyover was built when there was a plan to construct the Lavalin Skytrain along Ratchadaphisek Inner Ring Road in 1984. Therefore, BMA decided to construct a flyover on either side of the road. However, Lavalin Skytrain was aborted since Lavalin could not find financial resources to realize the project.

MRTA is constructing a subway along the old Lavalin route and found that the flyover will block the entry of the park and ride facility (a 9-floor building). The blueprint of the parking facility stipulates that it is necessary to demolish the old flyover and build a new one at the center of the road with a ramp connecting the flyover with the park and ride. The budget for park and ride is about 100 million baht (US\$ 2.5 million) which MRTA will pay first and then BMA have to pay MRTA back. MRTA will cut down the support pillars of the flyover so the tunnel can be built without interruption on the flyover structure. Such a process will speed up the construction since there is no need to wait until the flyover is demolished and postpone the demolition process.

MRTA is now preparing the demolition of the flyover to be ready by the end of the year and MRTA will ask Traffic Police to plan for traffic management to minimize the demolition effects on the people.

MRTA Tunnel Construction On Schedule

Thairath, January 4, 2001

Mr. Praphat Jongsanguan (MRTA Director) said that the construction of the subway tunnel has met the schedule set by MRTA even though it was initially delayed due to the problems with land transfer. There is 200 meters more to be done (from Samyan to Hua Lamphong) and the tunnel will be done in this February, after 3 1/2 years of tunnel construction (started in August 1997 at Bon Kai). The internal structure of 18 subway stations is done, only the internal decoration (laying tracks, installation of escalators and elevators, and setting up subway systems) is left to be done.

Mr. Praphat said that there are three civil engineering sections that need to be sped up to be completed on time (Northern section to be opened on December 5, 2002, and Southern Section to be opened on August 12, 2003).

Three civil engineering sections to be sped up:

1. Ventilation systems

2. Eight emergency exits at the following places

—2.1 Chula Soi 5 (between Sam Yarn and Hua Lamphong Station)

—2.2 Between Queen Sirikit and Sukhumvit Station

—2.3 Front of BB Tower between Sukhumvit and Phetburi Station

—2.4 Front of People Republic of China Embassy, just before Tiam Ruam Mit Station

—2.5 Front of Robinson Department Store – Ratchada Branch (between Tiam Ruam Mit and Pracharat Bumphen Station)

—2.6 Front of Nikko Mahanakhorn Hotel – now Grand Hotel after changing the ownership (between Pracharat Bumphen and Suthisarn Station)

—2.7 Front of Panaphan school (between Lad Phrao and Phahol Yothin Station)

—2.8 Chatuchak Park (between Phahol Yothin and Mochit Station)

3. Tunnels across Suthisarn and Huay Kwang Intersection

Structure of 18 Subway Stations Nearly Done

Thairath, January 15, 2001

Mr. Chookiat Phothayanuwat (Director Construction Dept., MRTA) said the civil work section and the foundation work of 18 stations is nearly done.

Civil Engineer Work	Done
Northern Tunnel (Bangsue – Huay Kwang)	100%
Southern Tunnel (Huay Kwang – Hua Lamphong)	95%

Station Foundation Works of Southern Section

Hua Lamphong Station

Station Roof —100%

Ticket Floor —100%

Sam Yarn Station

Station Roof —97%

Ticket Floor —94%

See Lom Station

Station Roof —92%

Ticket Floor —100%

Lumphinee Station

Station Roof —100%

Ticket Floor —100%

Bon Kai Station

Station Roof —100%

Ticket Floor —100%

Queen Sirikit Station

Station Roof —100%

Ticket Floor —100%

Sukhumvit Station

Station Roof —97%

Ticket Floor —100%

Phetburi Station

Station Roof —99%

Ticket Floor —98%

Rama IX Station

Station Roof —91%

Ticket Floor —100%

Stairways —100%

Ventilation System —50%

Station Foundation Works of Northern Section

Tiam Ruam Mit Station

Station Roof —100%

Ticket Floor —Not Done yet

Passenger Floor —97%

4 Stairways —Not Done yet

Pracharat Bumphen Station

Station Roof —100%

Ticket Floor —100%

Passenger Floor 100%

Tunnel at Huay Kwang Intersection

Digging Tunnel —41%

Concrete Work —38%

Suthisarn Station

Station Roof —92%
 Ticket Floor —100%
 Passenger Floor —100%
Tunnel at Suthisarn Intersection
 Digging Tunnel —45%
 Concrete Work —38%
Ratchada Station
 Station Roof —100%
 Ticket Floor —100%
 Passenger Floor —100%
Lad Phrao Station
 Station Roof —100%
 Ticket Floor —100%
 Passenger Floor —100%
 4 Stairways —Not Done yet
Phahol Yothin Station
 Station Roof —100%
 Ticket Floor —100%
 Passenger Floor —100%
 5 Stairways —Not Done yet
Mochit Station
 Station Roof —100%
 Ticket Floor —100%
 Passenger Floor —85%
 Platform Floor —91%
 2 Stairways —Not Done Yet
 Tunnel to go across Phahol Yothin Rd. —Not Done yet
Kamphaengphet Station
 Station Roof —Not Done yet
 Ticket Floor —Not Done yet
 Passenger Floor —91%
 3 Stairways —Not Done Yet
Bangsue Station
 Station Roof —100%
 Ticket Floor —100%
 Passenger Floor —100%
 2 Stairways —Not Done Yet
 Ventilation System on Footpaths —Not Done yet
 Ventilation System on the Middle Islets —100%
 5 Ventilation Chimneys —Not Done yet

December 2000

Updates from Thai Newspapers

Reducing BMTA buses running parallel to the subway

Thairath Daily, December 11, 2000

Mr. Praphat Jong-sanguan, MRTA Director, said MRTA has hired Mushell Co. Ltd. as a consultant company to study the system connecting the MRTA Blue Line with other modes of public mass transit with an expenditure of 70 million baht and an 18-month study period. The company started its work last September. Now the consultants are studying the details of the connecting systems including BTSC Skytrain since OCMLT made a new estimation that the daily passenger of MRTA blue would be about 300,000 passengers a day instead of the previous estimation of 400,000 passengers a day. Without good connecting systems, the MRTA will have serious problems. The company will finish the preliminary report in January 2001 and MRTA will use this preliminary report to discuss with other relating bureaus.

Mr. Wijit Wacharin, MRTA Deputy of Planning and Development Engineering, said it is necessary to readjust the bus routes. If the bus routes run parallel to MRTA for more than 10 stations, the bus routes must be readjusted to prevent the wasteful competition. After the preliminary discussion with BMTA, both MRTA and BMTA agreed to readjust the parallel routes.

Mr. Pheeraphongse Issaraphakdee, BMTA Director, said he agrees in principle to readjust the routes if BMTA buses run parallel to MRTA Blue line for more than 10 stations. However, he does not mean that BMTA will eliminate those bus routes since passengers would never accept this due to the fact that bus tickets are much cheaper than subway tickets. The BMTA director told the MRTA director that route readjustment means the improvement of the connecting system. The subway entries should allow buses to park nearby to facilitate the exchange of passengers in a hassle-free manner. BTSC Skytrain does not allow BMTA buses to park nearby the stairs causing lots of hassle and cutting down many potential Skytrain passengers.

Commentary: It would be much easier for BMTA to move the bus to closed to the Skytrain and Subway entries than moving the stairs to BMTA bus stops.

Installing telecommunication network before opening subway services to allow using mobile phone use in tunnels

Dailynews, December 13, 2000

Mr. Praphat Jong-sanguan, MRTA Director, said mobile phone concession holders came to discuss with MRTA since lots of people feel worried that they cannot use mobile phones inside a tunnel 20 meters below ground level. MRTA said there is no need to worry since MRTA is going to make a detailed discussion with mobile phone companies and BMCL Co. Ltd. about the installation of special signal receivers/transmitters allowing the mobile phone users to use their phones inside the tunnel.

Mr. Praphat said the BMCL Co. Ltd. has to install special equipment to allow the radio communications between the police during emergencies inside the tunnel and the installation of telecommunication special systems must be done by December 2002 for the Northern section and the whole system by July 2003.

MRTA tunnel will be done by the end of February 2001

Thairath Daily, Saturday, November 18, 2000

Mr. Praphat Jongsa-nguan, MRTA director, said that MRTA has nearly finished the tunnel construction. The first drill of the last section from Samyan station to Hua Lamphong station will be done on December 30, 2000 and the second drill of the section will be done on February 25, 2001.

The MRTA Director said the contractor have to dig Mahanakhon intersection to transport the equipment before digging the last section and remove the drills after finishing the construction. Therefore, it is necessary to make a detour from November 18, 2000 to March 10, 2001.

Commentary: We hope that the next government will make an immediate approval for the Southern extension and the contractor who will handle this job for MRTA.

October 2000

Updates from Thai Newspapers

MRTA and BMCL select Alstom-Mitsubishi as the producer of rolling stock for the MRTA Blue Line subway

Dailynews, BMA Section, September 8, 2000

At 4:30 PM on September 7, Mr. Prapaht Jong Sa-Nguan (MRTA Director) and Mr. Plew Treewitsawawet (CEO of Ch. Karnchang PCL) announced to the press that they have selected NESCO Co. Ltd., a Franco-Japanese consortium consisting of Mitsubishi Corporation, Mitsubishi Electric Corporation, and Alstom Transports, as the provider of rolling stock to be used on MRTA Blue Line. The ambassadors of France and Japan came to MRTA to witness this announcement.

Mr. Plew said Ch. Karnchang has selected NESCO Co. Ltd. since the company offered the best deal in financial terms, financial security, technical issues, maintenance, and quality assurance with its 16 billion baht budget. NESCO will become 49% shareholder of BMCL.

Mr. Plew said that BMCL was studying in detail BTS passengers to obtain marketing data since the company has seen that Skytrain carries much fewer passengers than expected. Nevertheless, MRTA will offer a lower fare to attract more passengers. Furthermore, MRTA will use a marketing campaign with a 15% lower fare during the first months or even the first year of subway service (December 2002-December 2003).

Extensions are a very critical issue to boost the number of passengers which requires strong and steady support from the government.

Commentary: The discount during the first year of service is a must indeed! I hope that NESCO won't make the same blunder with vending machines that Siemens did. The vending machines supplied by NESCO should accept 1-baht coins as well as 20 and 50-baht bills so passengers don't have to bother making change.

Still More September 2000 Updates from Thai Newspapers

MRTA Going Forward for Subway Southern Extension Gives a chance for BMCL to get the Extension Concession

Dailynews, Bangkok Metro Section, August 28, 2000

MRTA is going forward for the southern extension, waiting for the message from the Priority Allocation Committee set up by Dr. Trairong. At the same time, MRTA has a meeting with BMCL to discuss the plan to award the extension concession to BMCL with a compromise that BMCL must buy more rolling stock and freeze the fare rate at 14 to 38 baht level.

Mr. Praphat Jong Sa-Nguan, MRTA director, spoke about about ACM Sombun's bad rap that MRTA would have to follow the steps set by the law (actually budget constrains) by shortening the Southern extension to Hualamphong-Tha Phra route. However, OCMLT suggested that MRTA should extend to Bang Waek, 2 km more and total of 6 km so MRTA can connect with other mass transit systems at the proposed Taksin Center. MRTA is waiting for a consideration from the Priority Allocation Committee set up by Dr. Tairong Suwannakhiree, Deputy PM. If the committee approves their proposal, MRTA will forward the proposal to the Traffic Management and eventually the cabinet to approve the construction.

Mr. Praphat said more about the extension plan that the Southern extension would go from Hua Lamphong, pass the Yaowarat area and Wang Boorapha area (Bangkok Chinatown and Bangkok Old Trade Center respectively) which had limited space. Therefore, the single tunnel with 2 levels is a must since it is impossible to construct a double tunnel in the same way as Bangsue-Hua Lamphong route (except at Silom Station) has done. Furthermore, it requires a single tunnel with 2 levels across Chao Phraya River before going aboveground after passing Tha Phra Intersection.

Therefore, the budget reduction for this extension is very tough, if not impossible, to do due to the demanding tasks to be carried out. MRTA demands 40 billion baht budget for civil engineering work for this extension. The budget structure is the same old 80% from public for structure construction and the other 20% from private for rolling stock and services. For the concession, MRTA will simply ask BMCL to buy more rolling stocks and freeze the fare rate at 14-38 baht to boost the number of passengers due to expanding network.

Commentary: MRTA's hitting the nail on the head! At least, this state enterprise has done the right thing to expand southward even though it has to wait for approvals from many agencies and eventually the cabinet. However, MRTA should quickly gain R & D to enable the agency (and the contractors) to be able to dig underground tunnels and lay subway tracks so it can make a joint venture with SRT to dig subway tracks linking all 3 railway terminals in Bangkok (Hua Lamphong, Bangkok Noy, and Wongwian Yai) together to turn Bangkok into SEA transport hub.

September 2000 Updates from Thai Newspapers

Mass Transit Systems to Work with MRTA Subway

Daily News, BMA Section, August 24, 2000

MRTA spending 70 million baht to hire a consultant to analyze a plan to adjust all mass transit systems to connect with the subway after the full operation begins in 2003. The analytical study will be completed in 14 months.

Mr. Praphat Jongsanguan, the MRTA director said that MRTA had just signed a contract to hire Mushell Co. Ltd. to work as a consultant for a study to connect MRTA with other mass transit systems (actually other modes of land transportation) such as BMTA buses, Microbus, taxi cabs, Skytrain, trains, and so on. The budget for this analytical study is 70 million baht paid by JBIC. The study will start on September 1, 2000 and it will take 14 months to complete. During the study period the consultant will report to MRTA from time to time.

Mr. Praphat said the study details will emphasize on the rerouting of BMTA bus lines to prevent them from competing with the MRTA subway since the MRTA fare is higher than the best BMTA buses (14-38 baht for MRTA Blue Line vs. 8-18 baht for BMTA Euro-2 Air-conditioned buses). Without the rerouting of BMTA buses, MRTA will have a huge loss causing detrimental effects on other mass transit projects.

Commentary: It's about time for MRTA, BTSC, BMTA, and OCMLT to discuss the plan to connect and enable the passengers to use tickets to ride Euro-2 Air-conditioned buses and then ride Skytrain and/or MRTA and vice versa. If the SRT successfully revives the Hopewell project in 2007, another readjustment

should be under consideration. I hope that SRT will be able to revive Hopewell project so the line will be the main mass transit route if Thailand is to become a successful Olympic host in 2008. Otherwise, we have to wait until around 2020 to compete for a Olympic host again.

Sombun Fed Up with Chuan

Daily News, August 22, 2000

On August 21, 2000 at MRTA Office, there was the 8th year anniversary ceremony for the MRTA establishment, which Air Marshall Sombun Rahong, Ministry of the Prime Minister Office, taking charge of MRTA oversight.

Air Marshall Sombun spoke to MRTA officers and contractors during the ceremony and at one point he rapped about Chuan government: "This government pays no attention to the poor and powerless but takes a great care of the rich and powerful! This government is a totally stupid.... government.... sells the nation off to foreign imperialists since the government deliberately neglects the mass transit system while other nations always take a great care with their mass transit systems. No private sectors dare to invest in the mass transit systems since they don't want to see their companies become bankrupt like BTSC! Well, it sounds like I am blaming myself since I'm a part of this.... foolish government. I tried so hard to prevent the cabinet from making stupid decisions, but they failed to hear my voice!"

Air Marshall Sombun told the correspondents the construction the MRTA Blue line ran very well but it became impossible to finish the Northern Extension (Bangsue-Phra Nanaklao Bridge) by 2004 and the Southern Extension (Hua Lamphong-Bang Kae) by 2005 since Chuan and the Democrat cronies refused to acknowledge the critical matters of the MRTA extension, thus they rejected the budget proposal for the MRTA extensions.

Air Marshall Sombun agreed with Samak's plan to extend the Skytrain and he wants the fare rate lowered so it does not drive away the potential customers. He also said Samak knows so many people—politicians and bureaucrats alike—and knows that he can stretch the extensions as far as he wants. MRTA has no such a man so MRTA cannot extend as long as it wants. Therefore, MRTA has to beg the upcoming government to approve the extensions since Chuan government ran out of time.

August 2000

Updates from Thai Newspapers

Subway deal quietly pushed through

Concession terms fiercely criticised

Supoj Wancharoen, [*Bangkok Post*](#), August 2, 2000

The Metropolitan and Rapid Transit Authority yesterday signed a multi-billion-baht subway concession contract with Bangkok Metro Co Ltd. The signing was conducted quietly at the MRTA headquarters with PM's Office Minister ACM Somboon Rahong, Ch Karnchang Plc chairman Plew Trivisavavet and board members from the two firms present.

"That might be to avoid political criticism because the project involves huge investment and has been under strong attacks over its transparency in implementation. Also, the cabinet had rejected the contract several times," an MRTA source said.

Chart Pattana ministers strongly opposed the contract saying BMCL's 11.7-billion-baht contribution to the state over 25 years was too low and its fare rate of 14-36 baht was too high.

BMCL deputy managing director Sompodh Sripoom said his firm was about to choose a subway train supplier and that it was negotiating with four companies on four criteria: finance, technology, shareholding in BMCL and after-sale service.

BMCL wants a loan from its supplier and the candidates will propose loans in different currencies, he said.

He said the train suppliers were in contact for over a year and denied JBIC, a major creditor, was pressuring it to pick up the Japanese supplier.

He said the supplier could be chosen in the next few months and that part of the 20km subway, from Hua Lamphong to Bang Sue, could open in late 2002 with the full service opened in 2003.

The interested suppliers were the Alstom Group of France with a euro-and-yen loan of 19,036 million baht from the French Coface export credit agency; the Bombardier Group of Canada with a US-dollar loan of 19,321 million baht from Export Development Corp of Canada; Germany's Siemens Group with a euro loan of 26,045 million baht from KfW; and the JMC Group from Japan with a yen loan of 16,888 million baht from Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

June 2000

Updates from Thai Newspapers

Proposal to extend subway rejected – MRTA told B40bn estimate too high

Supoj Wancharoen – *Bangkok Post*, May 22, 2000

A government committee overseeing mega transport projects has rejected a proposal by the Metropolitan Rapid Transit Authority to spend 40 billion baht to extend the “blue line” subway currently under construction to Tha Phra.

Committee sources said the MRTA came under heavy criticism for trying to push through the proposal at Friday’s sitting chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Bhichai Rattakul. The committee felt the proposed cost for the 6.4-km extension of the underground railway was too high.

MRTA gave a breakdown of its proposed investment as: 27 billion baht for design and civil work, three billion baht for land expropriation, six billion baht for electrical installations and four billion baht for other expenses.

ACM Somboon Rahong, deputy prime minister supervising the MRTA, led other committee members in expressing reservations over the cost.

He said the figure was too high and the proposed budget for design and construction could be cut by at least 20%, the sources said.

Kamroplak Surasawadee, deputy director of the mega-project office, supported ACM Somboon’s view.

He said it cost MRTA 24 billion baht to build half of the 20-km Hua Lamphong-Bang Sue subway, known as the blue line.

The proposed cost of the extension could be cut by 25%, he was quoted as saying.

A Finance Ministry’s representative on the committee suggested that MRTA have talks with the National Economic and Social Development Board to set a priority for the proposed extension in comparison with other traffic projects.

The existing ceiling on the volume of foreign loans which MRTA can raise should also be discussed to avoid exacerbating the country’s foreign debt.

MRTA director Prapat Chongsanguan defended his proposal. He said the government should not be too concerned with the size of the investment but should look at the economic return the project could offer.

Compared to the economic loss caused by traffic jams, the project was a worthwhile investment.

The cost of the proposed extension was high because a section would have to pass under the Chao Phraya river.

His explanation failed to convince the committee.

Mr Prapat was asked to review his proposal and then resubmit it to the committee, the sources said.

MRTA also plans a northern extension of the blue line subway.

Pathway designs to connect MRTA and BTSC together have been completed

Dailynews, May 8, 2000

MRTA has finished designing pathways to connected MRTA and BTSC together – with a reserved area for BTSC to construct pathways along the rails later on.

MRTA director Mr. Praphat Jong Sa-Nguan told the press that MRTA has finished the pathway design for the connection at Silom station (MRTA). MRTA will have to use footpaths and road surfaces around Silom Road to install escalators from the ground levels to the station, and it will take three months to remove infrastructure before the installation of escalators can begin. After that the MRTA will erect pillars to support the construction and install a flyover from Dusit Thaneer to Robinson Department Store. There is no suitable area to construct connecting pathways from Chulalongkorn Hospital even though there is no problem finding an area to construct a flyover from Dusit Thaneer to Lumpinee Park.

MRTA Blue Line from Huay Kwang to Bangsue will be opened first

Thaipost, May 22, 2000

MRTA director Prapat Chongsanguan said that the construction of stations and tunnel is 62.09% complete. The Hua Lamphong to Huay Kwang section has finished 66.83% of all work: the main structure of all 9 stations in this section is done and now MRTA is working on internal construction and the stairways. The tunnel digging is 51.17% complete for the Southern section (7.628 km dug of 14.908 km) – Rama IX to Sukhumvit section and Queen Sirikit National Convention Center to Lumpinee section are dug. Now, MRTA is digging the tunnel from Sukhumvit to Queen Sirikit National Convention Center and Lumpinee to Silom.

The Northern Section is 57.35% complete. The main structures of almost all 9 stations are done. MRTA

is constructing ventilating rooms at the stairways. The tunnel in this section is 66.93% complete (12.121 km dug of 18.110 km) – Tiam Ruammit to Suthisarn, Ratchada to Phaholyothin, and Bangsue to Kamphaengphet are dug and Suthisarn to Ratchada finished on May 17, 2000. MRTA is going to dig from Mochit to Phaholyothin and open the Northern section (Huay Kwang to Bangsue) in July 2002 and open all sections in July 2003.

May 2000

Updates from Thai Newspapers

MRTA Proposes Southern Extension to the Cabinet and Talks with NESDB to Clear the Hurdles that Delay the Project

Recently NESDB considered megaproject investments—80 projects so far—and created three classifications:

- (1) Projects with the highest priority
- (2) Projects with the secondary priority
- (3) Approved projects with some management problems—10 projects—including the 70 billion baht project to extend the MRTA Blue Line from Bangsue to Phranangklao Bridge

Mr. Praphat Jongsanguan, director of MRTA, said he didn't feel sure if the news from NESDB about suspending the MRTA extension projects follows the facts since MRTA Blue Line cannot become profitable without northern and southern extensions and the cabinet has already approved the construction of northern extension of the Blue Line.

Mr. Praphat said MRTA will send the guidelines concerning the construction of the Southern extension from Hua Lamphong to Tha Phra (a section from Hua Lamphong to Bang Khae) to the cabinet for the approval. MRTA said the guidelines had been approved by the Large Transportation Management Subcommittee and still need cabinet approval to become effective.

Nevertheless, MRTA may send the plan back to the NESDB to discuss the financial viability of this project.

The project is indeed expensive—even the expenditure for laying tracks (25km) will cost 40 billion baht (US\$1.1 billion). 10 billion baht (US\$ 250-300 million) for the Northern extension (11.5km) and 30 billion baht (US\$750-800 billion) for the southern extension (13.5km).
(from *Manager Daily*, May 1, 2000)

Tunnel Digging to Connect BTSC and MRTA – Police Worrying about Traffic Jam During the Construction

There was a discussion about the construction of underground tunnels to connect BTSC and MRTA at Mochit and Civil Aviation Dept. on April 25, 2000 at Metropolitan Police HQ. The proposed tunnel will be 120 m long and go along Phaholyothin and Kamphaengphet Road. Construction will start on April 28, 2000 and be finished around mid-July. The construction will consume 3 lanes of road. Police said they feel so worried about traffic jam during the rush hour—especially the outbound lanes of Kamphaengphet Road. They will resolve the problem by using reversible lanes—turning two inbound lanes to two outbound lanes. The inbound will be jammed from June 20-July 12 since the left side of the BTSC line will have one lane left. Therefore, the police ask drivers to use Vibhavadee Highway and Rama VI Road instead of Phaholyothin.

BMTA will also have to rearrange local bus stops as follows:

- 1) Cancel the temporary bus stop at the corner of Chatuchak park and use Chatuchak Weekend market stop and that opposite of TMB Bank from April 28 to June 3
 - 2) Cancel the temporary bus stop at the corner of Chatuchak Weekend Market and use Chatuchak Park stop and that opposite of TMB Bank from June 3 to June 13
 - 3) Cancel the temporary bus stop at the corner of Chatuchak park and use Chatuchak Weekend market stop and that opposite of TMB Bank from June 14 to June 19
 - 4) Use all 3 bus stops from July 3 to 12
- (from *Daily News*, April 26, 2000)

MRTA and BKT Meeting for the Tunnel Discussion

Royal Treasure Department, the owner of Mochit land, will discuss with MRTA and BKT (Bangkok Terminal Co. Ltd.) land usage for the construction of tunnels connecting the Skytrain and MRTA. MRTA warns the Treasure Department that they will cancel the tunnel project unless MRTA is allowed to use the Mochit area within a month.

MRTA told the reporters that the construction of Mochit station (in Chatuchak Park) is nearly finished and

the proposed tunnel will end up in the Bangkok Terminal area – 6 m from the footpath. Unless the tunnel construction begins within this month, the contractor will have to wait and the MRTA will have to pay the workers even though there is no work to do. If the Treasury Department allows MRTA to work in the area, the tunnel construction will begin immediately.
(from *Daily News*, April 27, 2000)

April 2000

Updates from Thai Newspapers

Police Concerned About Blind Spots in Subway Stations

The Metropolitan Police report their concerns about telecommunication blind spots in subway stations. They said they cannot use their radios to communicate with police stations nearby or even with police HQ from the subway stations. These communication blind spots will interfere with police ability to track down criminals and assist crime victims – a very serious problem indeed!

Thus far, MRTA and the Police Department have no solutions for the telecommunication blind spots yet. IMHO, MRTA will have to install antenna in every station as well as in the tunnels to enable police as well as passengers to communicate with their comrades in other places (from *Thai Post Daily*, April 4, 2000).

Subway Operator Chosen

The Cabinet has approved BMCL (Bangkok Metro Co. Ltd., Subsidiary of Ch. Karnchang PCL) to become the private operator of MRTA blue line despite strong protests from the Chart Patthana Party. However, it is up to Office of the Attorney General to scrutinize the deal and return the contract to the cabinet for final approval.

If the official contract is signed, Ch. Karnchang will definitely choose Japan Metro Consortium as its partner in developing the subway since Japan Metro proposed the lowest price and offered the best financing terms of the four bidders. Also, Japan Metro has the best technology and design and the German bidder (Siemens) could not compete in terms of speed or electricity efficiency.

Those bidding for the partnership with Ch Karnchang were:

- 1) Japan Metro (16.88 billion baht)
- 2) Alstom Transport and Mitsubishi Electric (19.036 billion)
- 3) Canada's Bombardier (19.32 billion)
- 4) Siemens (26.045 billion)

(from *Thai Post* and *Bangkok Post*)

March 2000

Updates from Thai Newspapers

Presently, we are waiting until there is a final solution to the conflicts between the BMCL (a private firm with Ch. Karnchang as the major shareholder) or MRTA (State Enterprise of the Prime Minister's office) – about who will buy trains and run the services. This conflict also has caused a bit of a political rift between the Democrats and Chart Phatthana parties since Chart Phatthana said that Ch. Karnchang paid less than what the TOR states in the contract (10 billion baht from Ch. Karnchang vs. 24 billion baht from TOR) and the fare is higher than what the TOR said (15-38 baht with inflation adjusted for Ch. Karnchang vs. 14-36 baht with the ceiling of a 4% hike in the TOR). The cabinet has to set up a committee to negotiate with Ch. Karnchang so they can find a compromise for all parties involved in this project. If negotiation fails, it will become necessary to call for a new bid or the government will have to take over the whole project so they can control the fare rate even though it would be counter to the privatization trend.

After that, we'll have to wait to see who will be the supplier for the MRTA trains, Siemens (German firm) or Kawasaki (Japanese firm). Siemens has an edge—it would be much easier to integrate the fare and car system with BTS [Skytrain](#) even though Ch. Karnchang prefers the Japanese firm which would cost 4-5 billion baht less than Siemens. from *Thai Post Daily*, January 18-21, 2000

The third hurdle for MRTA is to have a fare to satisfy the firm who will run the subway as well as Bangkokians. The BTS [Skytrain fare rate problems](#) should give MRTA and the would-be subway operators some lessons to ponder.

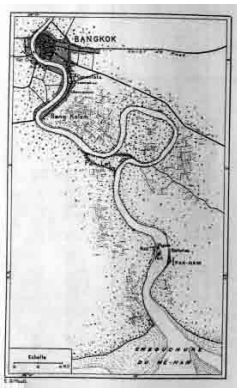
Bangkok in 1892

May 15, 2000

Categories: History

Bangkok in 1892 according to the French

From *Bangkok in 1892*, written by Messr. Lucien Fournereau. The graphics are engraved based on photographs.

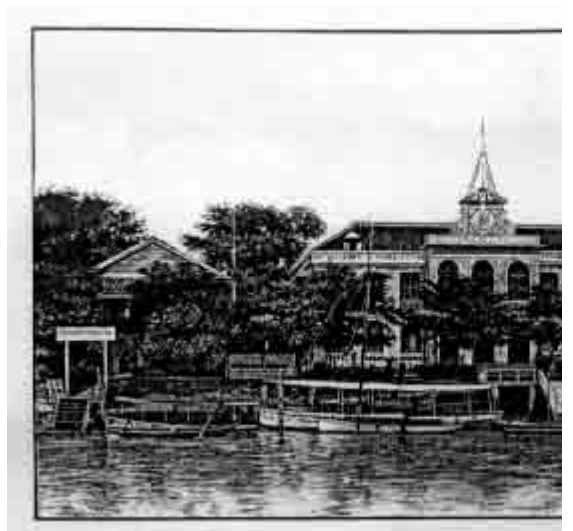


Above: The French Consulate (now the Embassy of France) still situated at the same place (near Assumption Catholic Church, Oriental Hotel, and East Asiatic (Thailand) Co. Ltd. old office).

Left: map of Bangkok

The French author had a very strong prejudice against the Anglo Saxon (British and German) influences in Bangkok such as products in the markets and the noisy British and German clubs. Even the Oriental Hotel could not escape criticism.

Right: Oriental Hotel



He said the trams were pulled by two ponies, with passengers crammed in like sardines and laden with goods and baskets. Tram coaches were made from teak



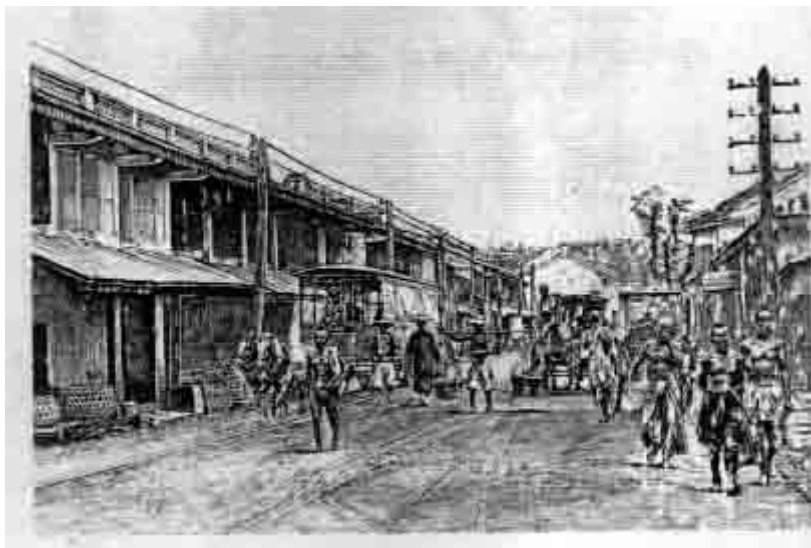
were "deprived of windows." There were four seats in each class with pillows.

Left: A horse-drawn tram

The French author also made several criticisms about what he had seen in Bangkok before reaching the City Wall—canals turning into cesspools with blackish and stinky water and during the dry season floating corpses, Wat Saket crematorium ground full of scattered corpses accompanied by vultures and dogs and the choking smoke from burning corpses, narrow and dirty roads including New Road (Chareonkrung Road), boring life in Bangkok compared to Saigon, etc.



Right: Gate of Wat Saket



Even for the buildings within the City Wall, which looked good, such as the Grand Palace, the author found criticisms to make (very hot ground, scattered old buildings, and so on).

The French author concluded that Bangkok would be in much better shape if colonialists spread their influence into the city.

Left: New Road (Chareonkrung Road)

Gem scam account: TGJ Thai Center Co., Ltd.

August 1, 2000

Categories: Gem Scam

[Return to Gem Scam main page](#)

Gem scam account: TGJ Thai Center Co., Ltd. – August, 2000

We are following the case of TGJ Thai Center Co., Ltd. From an email we received:

Great website, I wish I have read/found it before I visit Thailand.

I would like to ask you to help me with getting my money back of T.G.J. THAI CENTER CO., LTD. I have a bill which have written on it (with a stamp) “if every thing not ok they will pay back same amount that I have paid”. I might be able to visit Bangkok one day at the end of August. Can you advise me how to deal with this matter, as I am traveling alone and can stay only one day. I do not know whether the address on the bill is their right address.

Address of seller: TGJ THAI CENTER CO., LTD.
463/9-12 loog luang road, Bangkok 10300 Thailand.
Tel: +628-1484, 6281482 fax:+280-3619

[See their business card](#)

[See the certificate](#) – Official-looking documents are one of the requirements of any scam in the developing world.

My story is very alike of the ones on your website:

After two great weeks of vacation in the North and South of Thailand we spend one day in Bangkok before we get back to The Netherlands.

On Saturday (17th of June at 14.00 hours) we were walking in the direction of the Wat Po. A very helpful student, said it was closed. He said that the temple close until 2 p.m. today due to the national Buddhist ceremonies.

But he said we were very lucky to be in Thailand because the Government had launched an Export Factory Promotion and we should drop by the exhibition.

The Student said the government had told tuk tuk drivers to charge a minimal fee to visit four temples and the exhibition to encourage tourists to go. The men flagged a tuk tuk down for us. During our second visit of a Wat, we met a Professor how asked us how we had got to the temple and we explained about the Export Factory Promotion and said the tuk tuk driver was waiting for us.

He said it was difficult for professors to go abroad because of their low salaries, but that he has traveled several times thanks to the Annual Export Promotion which sold tax-free jewelry to Thai nationals to help them finance trips abroad. The principle being to resell the jewelry overseas for 100 percent profit.

He said this had enabled him to travel to Amsterdam, where he worked for the government (showed his ID). He said he sold his jewelry to Diamond House in Amsterdam at a 150 percent profit.

He said export promotion has been extended to tourists—to encourage them to come back and spend more money in Thailand.

The tuk tuk driver took us there and a representative at the center gave us a crash course on Thai blue sapphires.

We bought 1 set of earrings and necklaces for 50.000 bath. Returned in Holland we found out the real worth of it: only 2500 baht.

So far we have found out that the TGJ Thai Center was closed (presumably by the police) sometime around July 4 or 5, 2000. It seems many people were cheated. The Nang Leung Police Station (tel. 282-5105, 281-3002) is handling the case. The officer in charge is Pol. Lt. Ahjanah. He says there is not much he can do until they catch the scammers. He recommends keeping the pressure on by getting in contact with *Khao Sut*

(tel. 954-3961-7) newspaper. They broke the story and are following it. We contacted them, but they do not seem interested in pursuing the story further. Sources at the Tourism Authority have informed us that the gem dealers have reopened under another name, but they can't be sure.

[Return to Gem Scam main page](#)

The Rama VIII Bridge

August 6, 2000

Categories: Bridges



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

August 6, 2000 – Bridge supports rising on the Thonburi side of the Chao Phraya River.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

October, 2000 – The pillars meet. Note the longtail boat in front of the right pillar.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

March 24, 2001 – The titanic pillar now towers over everything in sight



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Fast Facts

- *An asymmetric bridge over the Chao Phraya River (i.e. this bridge will have one giant pillar on the Thonburi side with cables supporting a road structure that goes between the inverted-V of the pillar)
- *To honor the Thai King HM Rama VIII
- *Links Klong Bang Yikhan, Thon Buri with Bang Khunprom on the Bangkok side
- *On the Bangkok side, the bridge rises from Wisutkasat Road (also spelled Wisutthikasat or Wisut Kaset). It is a small soi by the Bank of Thailand.
- *Approved by the Thai cabinet on January 9, 1996.
- *The project was initiated by His Majesty the King as part of the Royal Chaturathis project to address traffic problems in the Pinklao area.

*Section one of the project, which cost 392 million baht, starts at Arun Amarin intersection off Boromratchavhonanee Road and runs to Klong Bang Yikkan (this is part of the elevated road with leads out of town through the Pinklao area)

*Section two, which will cost 2.7 billion baht, includes the bridge and the associated connecting roads on either side of the Chao Phraya River.

*from [Buckland and Taylor site](#) -> "The Design/Build contract was awarded to a Joint Venture headed by PPD Construction Co. Ltd. of Thailand, China State Construction Engineering Corporation and BBR Systems Ltd. of Switzerland with engineering services provided by Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick Ltd. (site inspection and geotechnical design) and

Buckland & Taylor Ltd. (cable-stayed design). Buckland & Taylor Ltd.'s scope of work includes both the design of the cable-stayed bridge and the provision of construction engineering for its erection."

*The bridge will have a span of 300 meters over the river and a total length of 2.1 km.

Construction Schedule

Phase	Task	Completion
1	Construction of giant bridge support on the Thonburi side of the Chao Phraya River	May 27, 2001
2	Construction of elevated road to the edge of the river on the Thonburi side	May 31, 2001
3.1	Beginning of factory construction of hanging road sections	June 10-20, 2001
3.2	Beginning of installation of the hanging sections	June 20-30, 2001
4	First cable installation to hanging road sections	July 10-20, 2001
>5	Last cable installation	December 10-20, 2001
6	Last concrete road section put in place	December 20-31, 2001*



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Rama VIII Bridge Latest News

New 20 baht note – May 4, 2003

The reverse of the new 20 baht note (right) features HM King Rama VIII and the bridge that memorializes his life...

Any zoning restrictions around the bridge?

[Tall buildings banned near Rama VIII Bridge](#) – Bangkok Post, April 24, 2003

The announcement took effect on April 4 and will last a year. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration will upgrade it to an ordinance later to make the ban permanent, said city clerk Nathanon Thavisin. BTW: the article seems to be largely rewritten from this [MCOT release](#).

Rama VIII Bridge officially opens – September 20, 2002<

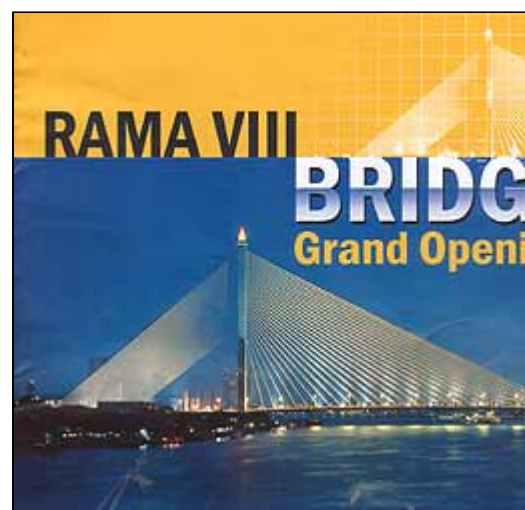
Right: Cover of the Bangkok Post ad insert on September 20 with various photos and info on the project.

Rama VIII Bridge will officially open September 20 – September 8, 2002

According to the Public Relations Department: The Rama VIII Bridge will be opened officially September 20, 2002, with HM The King presiding over the ceremony. September 20 is the birthday of King Rama VIII. The elevator to the top of the 160 meter bridge tower is presently being tested. *The Bangkok Post* adds on September 10: *The road leading to Rama VIII bridge will be partially closed for a week from Monday to allow tents and a stage to be set up for the bridge's official opening on Sept 20.... Between Sept 16-21, three of four lanes would be blocked to prepare for the inauguration, which will be presided over by His Majesty the King*



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The Rama VIII opened to traffic on May 7, 2002 – [Walking day on the Rama VIII Bridge, May 6, 2002](#)

May 8, 2002 – Wisarut Bholsithi reports: According to the radio (FM93.5) and Khaosod Daily (May 8, 2002) the official opening date for Rama VIII Bridge will be on September 20, 2002 (the birthday of King Ananda Mahidol and King Chulalongkorn – which is also National Thai Youth Day).

Even though Rama VIII Bridge is open for traffic to relieve congestion during the back to school period (during the middle of May), it is not fully completed yet since the ramp at Bang Yeekhan (Thonburi) is not done. The installation of elevators to the Observation Tower (with a golden lotus decoration on the top and the anagram King Ananda Mahidol), the handicapped elevators in the 4 pillars with golden lotuses on top (on both sides of bridge), and the 50-rai (20-acre) of public park at the foot of the bridge (Thonburi side) are not done yet. The golden wrap on the cables is installed for safety reasons.

Rama VIII Bridge open all day for walking on May 6 – The Nation, 08:04, May 2, 2002

The Nation is reporting that the Rama VIII Bridge will be open from 6am to 10pm on Monday, May 6 (a national holiday) for pedestrians only.

The Rama VIII Bridge opens on May 7 – Bangkok Post, 07:57, April 30, 2002

Construction of an additional entrance and exit on Charansanitwong 40 road is under way. The bridge also has an observation tower, pedestrian cycle ways and lifts for the disabled. City clerk Kriengsak Lohachala said the city would organise a mini-marathon next Monday, May 6. He expects the event to draw 20,000 runners.

April 11, 2002

The *Post* is reporting that the handover will not occur until the end of April 2002 and *The Nation* is reporting (April 11, 2002) that the bridge will officially open on June 9, 2002.

The Rama VIII Bridge is 98% complete and will be handed over on April 12

....Additions like a 160-metre high scenic tower, an elevator for the disabled and an extra entrance and exit would be finished in about five months....The Office of the Commission for the Management of Land Traffic expects the new bridge to relieve 30% of the inbound traffic congestion and 28% of the outbound congestion on Pinklao bridge and 16% of the inbound traffic and 11% of outbound traffic on Sanghi bridge during rush hours....Rama VIII is an asymmetrical cable-stayed bridge with a single pylon. Its 300-metre span is the fifth longest in the world. The longest is the Flehe bridge in Dusseldorf, Germany, built in 1979 with a 368-metre span above the Rhine river. Mr Nimit said the Rama VIII bridge would emphasise Thai architectural aspects including lotus patterns on its handrailings and golden cables as well as local construction materials. The contractor had yet to decide on the colour of the bridge to match its golden cables, he said. (from The Bangkok Post, April 3, 2002, [Rama VIII bridge could be in use for Songkran festival](#) by Supoj Wancharoen, thanks to Entz for pointing this out.)

UPDATE: *The Nation* reports that the bridge is 95 percent complete. The Rama VIII Bridge is expected to be completed on March 28. Possible inauguration dates are April 31, June 9 and September 20. Governor Samak accused Bank of Thailand (BoT) officials for "failing to honour a promise that the bank would allow construction on certain parts of its compound so the access road would be wider." (from [King may open new bridge](#), The Nation, February 19, 2002)

UPDATE: *Matichon* newspaper on June 7, 2001 reports "Rama VIII Bridge and the connecting road is 68% done and it will open on December 5, 2001. Rama VIII Bridge will reduce the traffic volume at Pin Klao Bridge and Krung Thon Bridge by 8-30%."

Gem scam account: Gem deals are too good to be true

August 21, 2000

Categories: Gem Scam

[Return to Gem Scam main page](#)

Gem scam account: Gem deals are too good to be true

August 21, 2000

Editor's note:

The local press has recently reported several cases of foreign tourists being duped by jewellery scams. Generally, the ploys used, as reported by the victims, are quite similar. The following are stories of two tourists who reported their bad experiences in the crooked gem business.

On May 28, this year, my partner and I were walking up to the Golden Palace late in the day. We knew the palace was closed as it was after 5 pm. While looking at our guidebook, we were approached by a man who said he was a chemistry student at a university; he talked for about 20 minutes, asking us about London and teaching us Thai words.

He then said that "today was a special holiday" and that tourists could buy gems without incurring tax. He said we should go to Wat Inthrawihan, where we could observe prayers, not something one could normally do, and he persuaded us to let him get us a tuk-tuk as he could get it cheaper because he was Thai.

We went to the temple and looked around and then went back to the tuk-tuk. However, the driver directed us to go and look again and we were then approached by another man. This man said he worked for the government, and was here with his mother, who had come to buy gems. He then told us a story similar to the man at the Golden Palace, and said his friend from Newcastle, England, came every year to take advantage of this offer. He said we could sell the gems in London and make a profit of 150 percent.

We went with the tuk-tuk driver to the shop, Thai Royal Gems, where we were given refreshments. The man there told us the same story. He said that because they didn't charge tax, we couldn't pay by credit card, only cash. They arranged for a saleswoman to accompany us back to our hotel so we could get our passports and credit cards. She then took us to two different cash exchanges to draw out cash on our cards, amounting to 144,000 baht.

We got back to the shop at 8 pm and were presented with three different diamond and sapphire sets. We were told we could sell them to Tiffanys Jewellery Shop in the UK, and the Thai shop would pay for them to be delivered to our home address.

The saleswoman then took us out to dinner and paid for our taxi home. It wasn't until we had just got out of the taxi that we saw a notice describing the "gem scam" in Bangkok. We went straight to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) police, who said they could not help us until we had the gems back from London, but we could expect a full refund..

We returned to the tourist police, with the gems, on July 5, and were told that the shop's manager would be arriving in the afternoon. We went back at 2 pm, but it was just a messenger who arrived saying we could only get a 90 percent refund, but not until July 15.

We argued with this man and he said his boss was coming from the shop. Another guy turned up offering us an 80 percent refund if we would come back to the tourist police the following day. On July 6 we returned but were told by the first man that there was no money to give us until July 15. He then said he might be able to give us 10,000 baht, but later refused.

We are very upset that the tourist police have not given us any support in this matter, and that they talked about us in Thai to the men from the gem shop and laughed at us.

Over the past few visits to the police station we have encountered many other tourists who have been tricked in this way by the Thai Royal Gems Shop, some of whom have returned to the shop for a refund, and have been treated in a very threatening way.

It appears the police do nothing and the gem shop continues to make extortionate amounts of money selling fake jewellery.

Alexandra Standen

On the way to the Golden Palace, a man who said he worked for the government approached me. He told my partner and myself that the palace was closed; we knew the palace was closed so we did not suspect anything.

He told us that day was “Buddha Day” and that tuk-tuks were only allowed to charge 20 baht for three hours. He told the driver to take us to the temples that were open to have a look. We got to Wat Inthrawihan and an official guide, who was wearing identification, approached us.

This guide talked about the temple and was with us for 45 minutes. He eventually told us how he was a student who paid for his education through a government scheme which allowed people to buy gems, without paying tax. He then told us that tourists could buy them also and that that day was the last day of the sale.

We were told that the place to buy was the “Expo Centre”, which we believed was a large building for international trade. When we got to the gem store a very friendly gentleman greeted us and offered refreshments. We were not alone at any time, and were offered a gem set, which we were told was guaranteed by the government to be worth twice what we would pay, and he gave us an address in London where we could sell it.

We were then taken by car to our hotel to collect our passports and credit cards, and then taken to Bangkok Bank, where we took out a cash advance for 192,000 baht.

We were told that we could have a full refund and that the Thai government would stand behind the value of the gems.

Only when we left the shop and were allowed to speak freely did we realise that the whole thing was a scam. We immediately went to the tourist police, who told us to go to the airport to intercept the package. We did this and were told that a refund would be no problem.

We went to the TAT headquarters and were told that we would have to wait on the representative of the store. A man came with whom we had to argue for two hours to get to the man whom we thought was the boss (but was not), and these men were allowed to use the police station as freely as they wished.

We were promised that we would get an 80 percent refund the next day. The next day we were told that we would get nothing, and that we would have to return to Bangkok on the 15th to get our money back. We spoke to many other people in the exact same situation who had given over similar amounts of money. There were ten to fifteen people every day with the same problem and the police did not care or do anything about the matter.

A member of the TAT staff walked out of the station and kicked a cabinet and said that the whole place was so dirty he would have to leave. We spoke to people whose lives were threatened, and a Japanese girl who was assaulted at the store, and nothing was done by the police.

Paul Murphy

Editor's note:

Outlook Consumer contacted the Tourism Authority of Thailand concerning these jewellery scams, the problems involved, solutions and related issues. The following was the reply from Pornthip Onnoom, the director of the Tourist Assistance Centre.

The Tourist Assistance Centre would like to inform you that as the gems and jewellery products of Thailand are renowned worldwide for their quality, a large number of tourists love to buy them for their own personal possession and/or as souvenirs. However, there is a group of people who use the fame of Thai gems and jewellery for their own benefit.

They work as a gang to persuade tourists to understand that Thai gems have an exaggeratedly high value. These people also claim that any items bought from the gem shops recommended by them will make a good profit if the tourists resell them later when they return to their countries. Tourists, believing in those words and seeing it as a worthy investment, fall victim to the gang.

WHY DOES THE JEWELLERY SCAM LINGER?

This issue is still a problem that has not yet been solved although the TAT has tried each and every method suggested. The reasons for this are as follows:

1. There has been no law or measures to control both the quality and the price of gemstones or set gems. The responsibility for control then falls to gem shop operators or jewellery manufacturers. This leaves a gap for selfish operators to take advantage of and sell costly products to tourists.
2. Gem shops offer competitive commissions to their agents, who successfully persuade and bring in tourists to buy products from their stores. This increases the price of those purchased items.
3. Directly responsible organisations have not yet passed strict and effective measures or laws to penalise the shops.
4. Tourists do not pay attention to related documents publicised by the TAT.
5. Tourists aim to make a profit for themselves by reselling the purchased items.

Furthermore, in accordance with the constitution (1997), all gem shops have the freedom to conduct their business and are completely qualified to register or cancel their operations with the Department of Commercial Registration at the Ministry of Commerce. It is beyond the TAT's authority to suspend their registration.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR TO DEAL WITH THE GEM SCAM?

The TAT has continually searched for solutions to this problem. We organised a conference with related organisations such as the Tourist Police Division, the Department of Commercial Registration, the Revenue Department, and the Office of Consumer's Rights Protection to request their cooperation.

The conference was also aimed to exchange information and find solutions for the problem. At present, the TAT has established both active and passive procedures to prevent this problem from happening in the future.

The TAT has published documents, namely, "Essential Precautions" and "Advice for Tourists Travelling in Thailand" to be distributed to tourists in various places.

The Immigration Office has also been asked to hand out "Advice for the Visitor", which is displayed on the Web site. We also supported the establishment of the Jewel Fest Club, which is an alternative for tourists who wish to purchase standardised gems. The club also guarantees to refund money to tourists under its stated conditions.

As for tourists who have already bought items, the TAT has requested cooperation from the Tourist Police Division to liaise with shops. In practice, the negotiations for returning purchased items and refunding the money are troublesome since there is no law controlling gem prices. The shops argue that the sale has been

finalised already. Therefore, it is difficult to take legal action against these shops. Gem products and gold ornaments are not under the control of the Consumer's Rights Protection Act BE 2541 (1998).

However, if tourists discover later that purchased items are fake, this is illegal. Tourists must press charges against the shop within three months after the shop is made aware of the wrongdoing. In cases when the products are real, but the cost is unusually high, the civil law does not apply as there is no standard price for gems, unlike other consumer products. Still, negotiations to return the products to the shops can be conducted. A refund, on the other hand, is denied. A customer can resort to civil law to have the matter resolved.

As for shops that have been closed down and reopen under a new name, the Tourist Police Division informed us that there is no law or regulation to force these shops to be responsible for any problems from their previous operations. This is an advantageous gap for shops to continue duping tourists.

For more information on legal action, please contact the Tourist Police Division on 678-6800-9 or the Tourist Police Service Centre on 1155.

Kindly rest assured that this matter has been given close attention by both the TAT and the Tourist Police Division. We sincerely hope that, with all cooperation rendered from related organisations, the problem will soon be solved.

Editor's note:

The TAT also enclosed some of their documents aimed at helping tourists not to be deceived by gem scams. The following is a brief, edited version of one leaflet:

If you should encounter any of the following ploys, it is more than likely a scam is being perpetrated.

The sales pitch is made near a monastery on the street by a tuk-tuk driver. Be wary of any encounter that ends up requiring your presence in a gem shop.

Buying gems or jewellery to resell at double or triple the purchase price is an impossible proposition under any circumstance.

Make price comparisons in various places before deciding to buy. Never be in a hurry.

Never mail sapphires or other precious stones. Take them with you.

Do not believe special sales of any kind. Reputable dealers hardly ever offer sales.

There are no promotions, shows or special sales on jewellery authorised by the government or any official agencies at any time of the year.

The government does not own, operate, subsidise, or authorise any jewellery stores.

Many shops have no credit card reading device of their own but have to use the facilities of other shops.

Should tourists have doubts about buying jewellery, they should obtain information from the Tourist Police or the TAT on 1155 or 694-1460.

[Return to Gem Scam main page](#)

Just Embarrassing (efforts to stop the scam)

August 22, 2000

Categories: Gem Scam

[Return to Gem Scam main page](#)

Just Embarrassing... (efforts to stop the scam)

There are more current articles than these below, but why bother posting them? It's always the same: foreign embassies and international travel associations demand a stop to the gem scam, but nothing changes.

Bangkok urged to stop jewellery scam (AFP, *The Nation*/Asia News Network, August 22, 2000)

Foreign embassies in Thailand are asking the Thai govt to clamp down on its gem scam operators after tourists complain of being cheated

BANGKOK — Frustrated foreign embassies are urging the Thai government to clamp down on Bangkok's notorious jewellery scam operators after being swamped by complaints from unsuspecting tourists.

The Australian, British, Swiss and Japanese embassies are now teaming up to request high-level talks with the Thai Foreign Ministry in a bid to crack down on the gem dealers.

Victims are typically approached by "'tuk tuk" (motor rickshaw) drivers and illegal "'guides" who waylay tourists outside the city's landmarks, inform them that the attraction is closed that day and offer to help them find cheap jewellery. "'The problem is certainly on the rise," British consul Brian Kelly said. "The fact that much of this shady dealing is blatantly going on in the Grand Palace area in full view of the police and Tourism Authority of Thailand officials makes it bizarre."

Earlier this month, Thai police and the tourism authorities vowed to work together to close down the fraudsters who sell jewellery to tourists at prices far above their real value.

But Bangkok tourist police said it was hard to close down the shady dealers because tourists entered the deals voluntarily and there was no global standard for setting the value of jewels.

About 200 people are arrested in relation to jewellery fraud each month, according to police figures.

They are charged with causing a nuisance and fined a maximum of 1,000 baht (S\$41.60).

Thailand's Tourism Authority governor Mr Pradech Phayakvichien had also said that the authorities were trying to reduce the number of gangs who are defrauding the tourists.

Fraudulent gem firms under watch—Tourist police move to end jewel scams

August 7, 2000, [The Bangkok Post](#)

Anucha Charoenpo

Tourist police are working with the Tourism Authority of Thailand to curb the long-standing problem of jewelry scams.

Unscrupulous jewelry companies, tuk tuk drivers, illegal tour guides, commercial bank staff and tour operators are all involved in the duping of foreign tourists into buying high-priced cheap jewelry.

The authorities are liaising with the Thai Gem and Jewelry Traders Association to establish common standards and a recognizable logo that visitors can use to identify reputable stores, said Pol Col Chanaphat Choeisombat, superintendent of the tourist police.

So far 49 jewelry companies were co-operating in the campaign. The industry was being watched closely for evidence of fraud and information would be posted for tourists.

Most visitors taken in by the swindlers buy gems in Thailand in anticipation of being able to sell them for a profit back home. When they have the jewelry appraised they find it is worth far less than what they paid for it.

Pol Col Chanaphat said brochures were being printed advising foreign visitors to be aware of being cheated and would be distributed on flights coming into Thailand.

Tourist police had been instructed to patrol popular areas and keep a close watch on tuk tuk drivers and illegal tour guides who approach foreign tourists.

The Commerce Ministry was also helping with the investigation, and the Revenue Department of the Finance Ministry had been asked to inspect tax payments of shops suspected of being involved in scams, and tour companies are being warned they could face de-registration.

Pol Col Chanaphat said 477 tourists, mostly Westerners and Japanese, complained of being defrauded by gem dealers last year. About 120 tourists had filed complaints so far this year.

About 200 people were arrested in relation to running gem scams each month, he said.

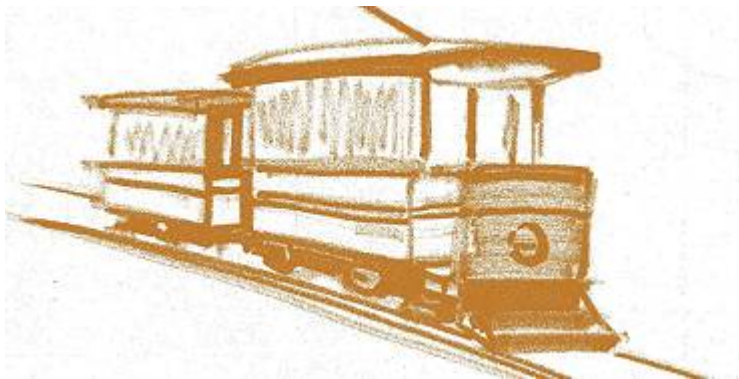
They were charged with causing a nuisance to others and fined a maximum of 1,000 baht.

[Return to Gem Scam main page](#)

Tram fares

September 1, 2000

Categories: Trams



From the National Archives

Something about old coins

In 1946-51, 50, 25, 10, 5, and 1 satang coins were brittle and dirty tin coins

In 1951, 50 and 25 satang coins were aluminum bronze coins – much better coins while 10, 5 and 1 Satang coins still dirty and brittle tin coins

In 1954, 10 and 5 satang were aluminum bronze coins while 1 satang coins were worthless tin coins (since the minimum stamps for domestic postcard was 5 Satang)

Tram ticket prices during the WWII

Before May 17, 1945:

2nd class: 6 satang/3000 meters (2 satang/km)

1st class: 12 satang/3000 meters (4 satang/km)

Bus tickets (e.g. Nai Lert White buses, Bangkok Municipal green buses, etc.): 12 satang/km (due to price controls during from the War Time Act BE 2485 (1942))

After May 17, 1945:

2nd Class: 10 satang/2500 meters (4 satang/km)

1st Class: 20 satang/2500 meters (8 satang/km)



Tram tickets from the collection of Ric Francis.

From *Lokbaimai Environmental Monthly Magazine* (Vo. 8 No. 87, September 1996)

Tram Fare Rates (from Jan 1, 1950 to October 1, 1968)

Bangkok Tram Line Name – 2nd class fare rate – 1st class fare rate

1. Bangsue-Kiakkai-Bang Krabue – 10 Satang – 20 Satang
2. Bangkrabue-Samsen-Wireless Road – 25 Satang – 50 Satang
3. City Pillar-New Road-ang Kholaem (Thanon Tok) – 25 Satang – 50 Satang
4. Silom Bridge-Sala Daeng-Pratoo Nam – 15 Satang – 30 Satang (shortened)

to Prato Nam to Saladaeng around December 1950)

5. Yotse-Natioanl Stadium-Prato Nam – 10 Satang – 20 Satang

6. Thewet-Saphan Dam-Hua Lamphong – 15 Satang – 30 Satang

7. Bang Lamphoo-Phan Fah-Wat Liab – 15 Satang – 30 Satang (or Bang Lamphoo – Tha Tian – Wat Liab)

From [4](#)

[Century of Thai Graphic Design:](#)

1894 – 1908 – 4 Atts (2nd class – Bangkok Tramway Co.Ltd.)

1897 – 1908 – 6 Atts/10 Stang (2nd class – Bangkok Tramway Co.Ltd.)

1893 – 1908 – 1 Fuang (for 1 station of the Paknam Railway Co.Ltd. – 1 baht from Hua Lamphong to Pak Nam)

May 1922 – 2.50 Tical (1st class monthly pass on Samsen Tramway – from the 10th Pedant to Pakklong Talad – about a silver dollar)

From Sornsarn Phrangsapha (penname: "Thor Thao"

– literally the "Oh-Old man") during the 1930's:

Paknam Railway

Hua Lamphong – Paknam, one-way, 2nd class : 60 Stang (0.60 baht, about a silver US Quarter)

Hua Lamphong – Paknam, one-way, 3rd class : 30 Stang (0.30 baht, about A US Dime and A US Nickel)

Hua Lamphong – Paknam Railway usually ran at 70-minute interval.

Mae Klong Railway

Klongsarn – Mahachai, one-way, 2nd class: 1.00 baht (about 4 US silver dimes)

Klongsarn – Mahachai, one-way, 3rd class: 0.65 baht (about 3 US silver dimes)

Klongsarn – Mahachai, round trip, 2nd class: 1.50 baht (about 6-7 US silver dimes)

Klongsarn – Mahachai, round trip, 3rd class: 1.00 baht (about 4 US silver dimes)

Klongsarn – Mae Klong, one-way, 2nd class: 2.00 baht (about 8-9 US silver dimes)

Klongsarn – Mae Klong, one-way, 3rd class: 1.30 baht (about 5-6 US silver dimes)

Klongsarn – Mae Klong, round trip, 2nd class: 3.00 baht (about a US silver dollar and 1-2 US dimes – enough to buy a bottle of White Label Scotch Whisky)

Klongsarn – Mae Klong, round trip, 3rd class: 2.00 baht (about 8-9 US silver dimes)

Nowadays, Wongwian Yai to Mahachai will cost the passenger as follows (one-way ticket):

3rd class -> 10 baht

2nd class without air-conditioning -> 15 baht

2nd class with air-conditioning -> 35 baht

For Wongwian Yai-Wat Singh, it will cost the passengers as follows (one-way ticket):

3rd class -> 3 baht

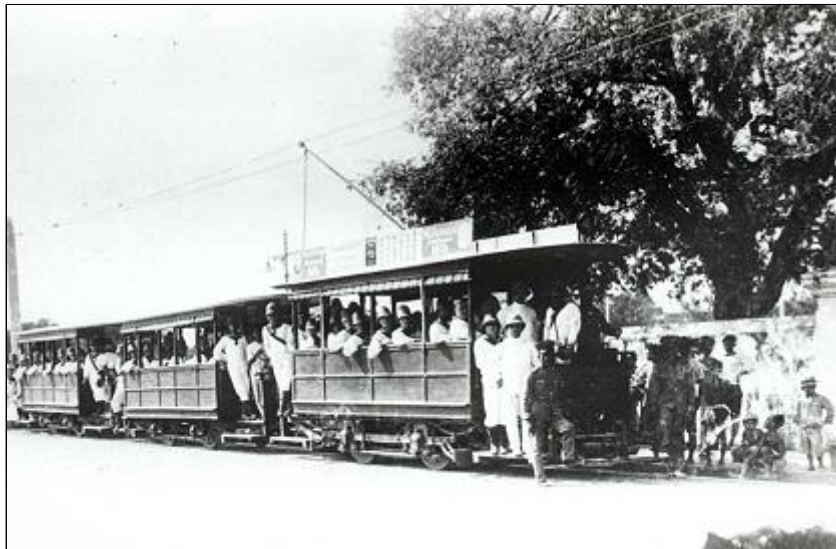
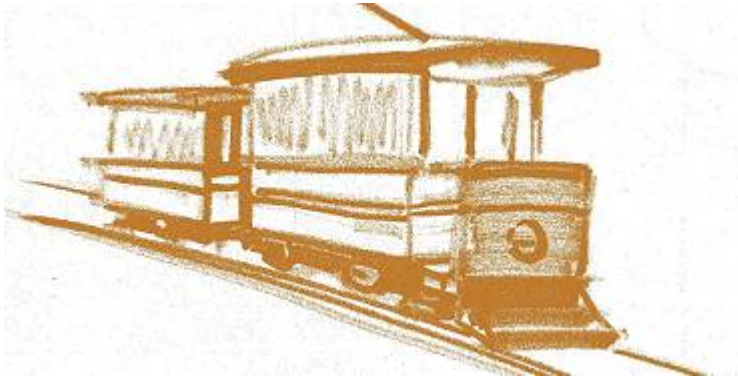
2nd class without air-conditioning -> 5 baht

2nd class with air-conditioning -> 25 baht

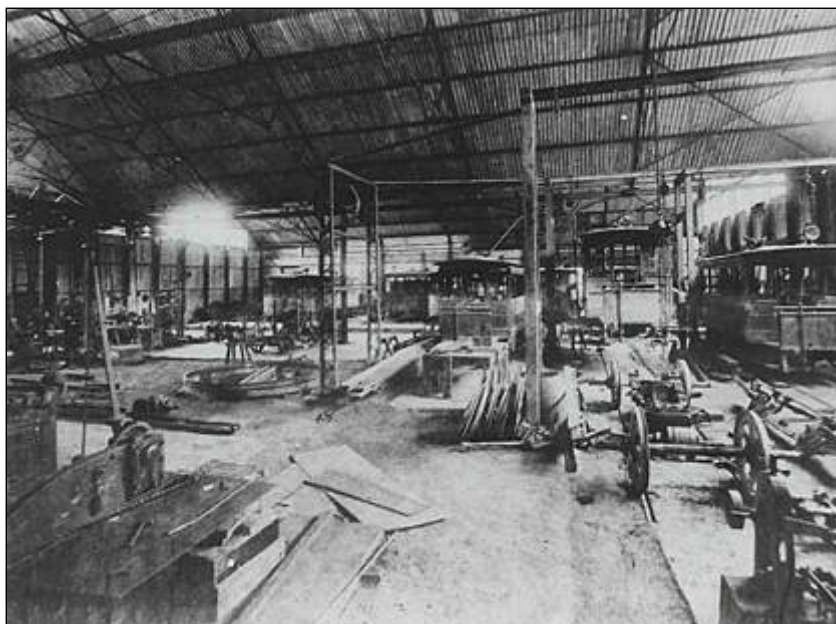
Various Bangkok Tram Photos

September 20, 2000

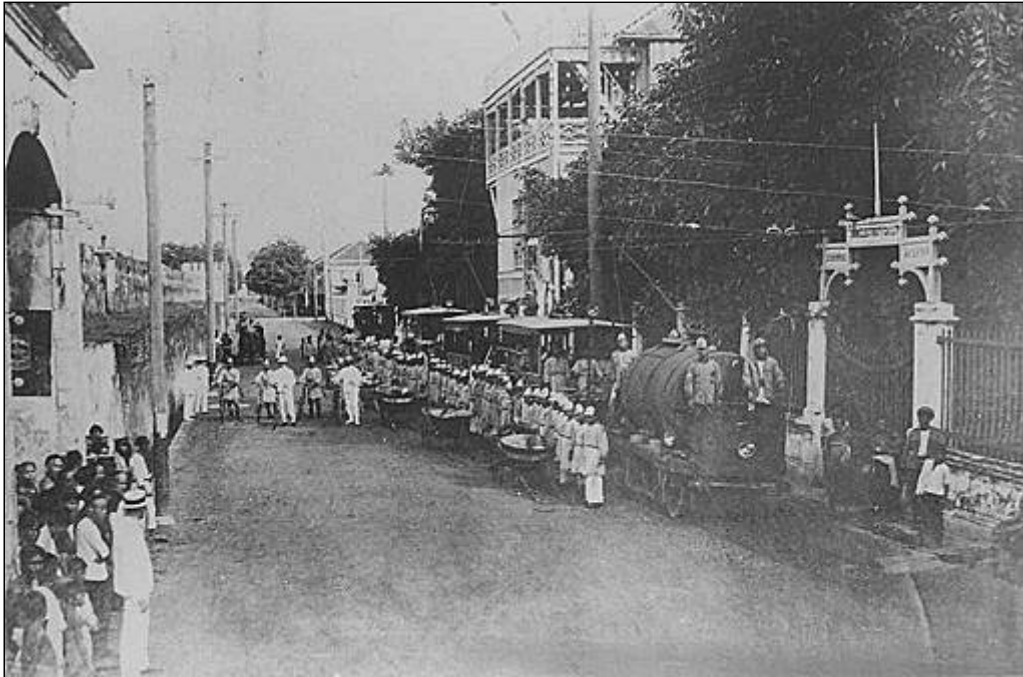
Categories: Trams



Early 1890s – Tram and trailer
Note the very early tram and trailers design.
(from the collection of Ric Francis)



Trams being built in a workshop
This is probably the one at Maen Sri Intersection
(AKA Saphan Dam)
not far from the Maensri Branch of the Metropolitan Waterworks
(from the collection of Ric Francis)



Sprinkler tram passing the tramway office site
(from the collection of Ric Francis)



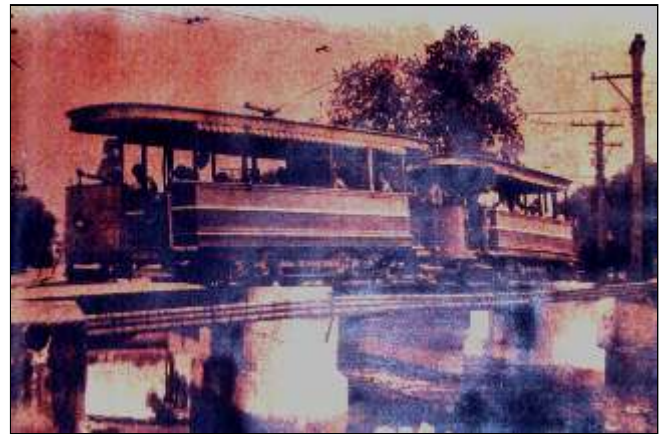
1896 – Charoen Krung Road area
(from the collection of Ric Francis)



1896 – Charoen Krung Road area
(from the collection of Ric Francis)



Tram interior



Undated photo of an early-style tram on the Bang
Krabue-Saladaeng
line going over a bridge.

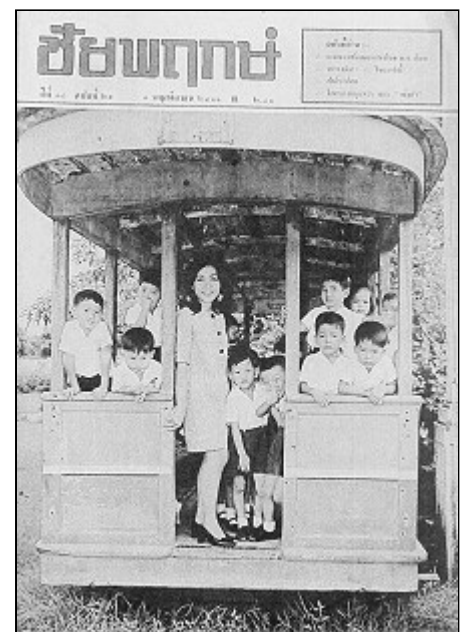
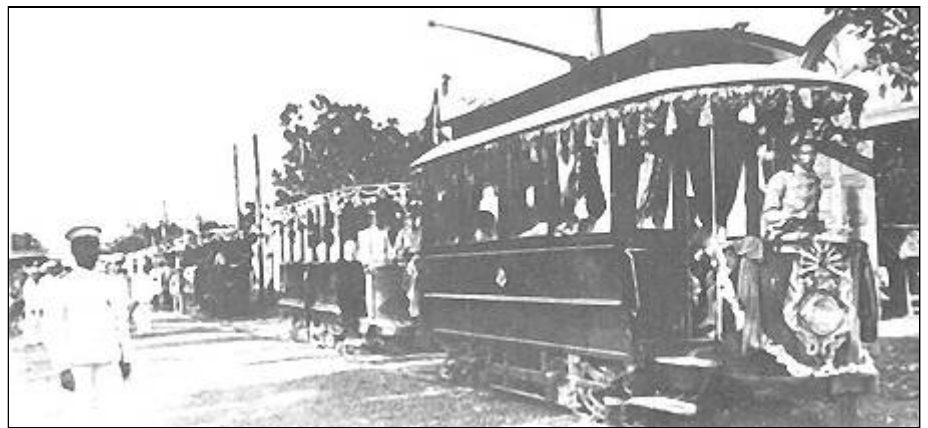


Magic lantern slide of "Bangkok Electric Tram" circa 1894
(from the collection of Ric Francis)



Bangkok tram in the [Thailand Railway Hall of Fame](#) (no.97)

Official opening of the SEC Tramway in 1901 with Tram No 4 leading. It is only photo of the first fleet of SEC on opening day with HM the King and the Crown Prince on board.



The cover of *Chai Ya Pook* magazine from 1968. Now nearly forgotten, the trams were a ever part of Thai city life for nearly 100 years.



Tram control panel (in Belgian) with control handles removed. The left dial controls speed and the right handle controls forward or backward motion (thanks to Barry Cross for clearing this up).



Bangkok tram in the [Thailand Railway Hall of Fame](#) (no.97)

Tram-Stop Signs



Tramway sign on New Road. Look close! On the left side of the nearest pole is a triangular sign with three stars. This is the tramway sign.



A present day photo of a tram stop sign
This is probably the last tram sign at Yaowarat Road near Werng Nakhonkasem (Thieves Market)
(from the collection of Ric Francis)

Master Plan News 2000

September 24, 2000

Categories: Master Plans

MASTER PLAN NEWS 2000

This section contains news of the Master Plan, overall Bangkok development, the Bangkok Governor's development plans, and articles about interconnecting mass transit projects.

[Mass Transit News main page](#)

Transportation Megaprojects – 2000 – 2006

Matichon Daily, September 24, 2000

On September 20, 2000, the Priority Allocation for Megaproject Committee led by Dr. Trairong Suwannakhiree and other state agencies (NESDB, MRTA, SRT, MOTC, MOF, ETA) have settled megaproject priorities according to rules set by the NESDB as follows (The following lists only selected projects relating to the Bangkok metropolitan area):

1) Projects that need to be completed on time according to the contract

- 1.1 Initial Stage MRTA Blue Line -> Bangsue – Hua Lamphong
- 1.2 Double Railway Tracks -> Talingchan – Nakhon Pathom

2) Projects that need strong support to start

- 2.1 Bang Yai – Ban Pong – Pak Tho – Cha Am Motorway
- 2.2 Southern Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road -> Bang Khunthian – Bang Plee
- 2.3 Skytrain Extensions – Samrong, Taksin, and Rama III
- 2.4 Entry Routes to New Bangkok International Airport – from Eastern Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road, Onnut Road, Rom Klao – King Kaeo Road, Bang Na – Bang Pakong Highway, Bangkok – Chonburi Motorway
- 2.5 Hopewell Revival Plan -> Rangsit – Hua Lamphong, Yommarat – Hua Mark
- 2.6 Northern Bangkok Transportation Center at Phaholyothin Depot and Old Mochit Bus Terminal
- 2.7 Industrial Ring Road (Royal Project) -> Rama III – Rot Fai Sai Kao – Poojao Samingphlai – Pra Pradaeng – Jaeng Ron – Mahaisawan – Rama III
- 2.8 MRTA Blue Line Southern Extension -> Hua Lamphong – Tha Phra – Bang Waek

3) Projects that need to be revised before implementation

- 3.1 Dao Khanong – Bang Khuntian – Samut Sakhon Expressway
- 3.2 Phayathai – Phuttha Monthon – Nakhon Pathom Expressway
- 3.3 Ram Indra – Eastern Outer Ring Road Expressway
- 3.4 Chonburi – Pattaya – Mab Ta Phut Motorway (extension of Bangkok – Chonburi Motorway)
- 3.5 The 3rd Stage Expressway, Nonthaburi – Kaset Intersection (N1) and At Narong – Bang Na (S1)

4) New projects (not under the NESDB) being considered due to their strong transportation potential – ready to be implemented by 2006

- 4.1 Mass Transit System Along the Sri Rat Expressway -> Chaeng Watthana – Bang Sue – Victory Monument (16.5 km)
- 4.2 Mass Transit System Along the Chalong Rat Expressway -> Ram Indra – Ekkamai (13 km)
- 4.3 Mass Transit System Along the Chaloe Mahanakhon Expressway -> Rama IV – Klong Toei – Doa Khanong (12 km)
- 4.4 The 4th Stage Expressway -> Samut Prakarn – Suk Sawat – Rama II (12 km)
- 4.5 The 5th Stage Expressway -> Rama II Highway – Phet Kasem Road – Nonthaburi (23.8 km)
- 4.6 Sri Nakharin – Bang Na – Samut Prakarn Expressway (13.8 km)

- 4.7 Bridge Across Chao Phraya at Kaik Kai Intersection (12 km)
- 4.8 Bridge Across Chao Phraya at Pakkret Intersection (15.7 km)

The Committee will submit this priority list to Subcommittee of Large Scale Transportation and OCMLT before sending it the cabinet for approval. The owners of the projects in group 1 will have to submit monthly reports to the OCMLT and the projects in other group will have to submit quaternary (trimonthly) reports to OCMLT. During the 6-year period (2000-2006), 600 billion baht (about US\$ 15 billion) will be needed to implement all of these projects.

Commentary by Wisarut: The Expressway and Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand was established by the Coup Decree of 290 on November 29, 1972. However, the First Stage Expressway (Chaloem Mahanakhon) was finished in 1987. Even though ETA has been assigned to construct mass transit systems along the expressways, I don't think that they will come up with any real ones very soon due to the economic downturn.

Nevertheless, ETA has scheduled the following projects:

- Chaeng Watthana -> Bang Sue -> Victory Monument 16.5 km 2005
- Ram Indra -> Ekkamai 13 km 2005
- Rama IV -> Klong Toei -> Doa Khanong 12 km 2007

For Chiang Mai Mass Transit System, ETA has scheduled the following projects:

- Chiang Mai Bureaucrat Center -> Upakhut -> Buak Krok 12.3 km 2005
- Hang Dong Intersection -> San Sai Intersection 8.6 km TBA
- Chiang Mai University -> Jaeng Sri Phoom 4.5 km TBA
- Saeng Tawan Intersection -> Chiang Mai Land 2.0 km TBA

If the ETA has successfully implemented three mass transit systems along the expressways of Bangkok in 2007, the stations will be:

Chaloem Mahanakhon Line – 12 km

- 1) Rama IV – connects with Bon Kai Station of MRTA Blue Line
- 2) Port Authority of Thailand
- 3) Chuea Ploeng – near Exxon and Shell Oil depot
- 4) Nang Linjee – near Wat Chong Lom
- 5) Wat Phomaen – Chinese Mahayana temple
- 6) Sathupradit Intersection – near Sathupradit Pier
- 7) Bang Klo – the End of Bang Klo – Chaeng Watthana Expressway
- 8) Rama IX Bridge
- 9) Chaeng Ron – near Thai Farmers Bank PCL Headquarters
- 10) Prachauthit – the intersection between Prachauthi and Suksawat Road
- 11) Karn Keha Suksawat – NHA Public Housing in Suksawat area
- 12) Rama II – Rama II Highway

Chalong Rat Line – 13 Km

- 1) Ram Indra – Ram Indra Km 5.5
- 2) Nuan Jan – intersection between Nuan Jan Road and Pradit Manootham Road
- 3) Nawamin – intersection between Pradit Manootham Road and Kaset-Nawamin Road
- 4) Suea Yai – Suea Yai area, used to belong to Suea Yai (Don Yai)
- 5) Chaokhun Singha – Chao Khun Singha canal -> the area around here used to belong to Chao Phraya Bodindecha (Sing Singhasene) – the Siamese Chancellor and Supreme Commander during King Rama III reign
- 6) Song Kathiam – near Song Kathiam Canal
- 7) Wang Thong Lang – intersection between Lad Phrao and Pradit Manootham Road
- 8) Bodin Decha – Bodin Decha High School
- 9) Sri Wara – Sri Wara Intersection
- 10) Rama IX Temple – Rama IX Temple, Rama IX Pond and Japanese School Pier
- 11) Pradit Manootham – the End of Ekkamai – Ram Indra Road
- 12) Ekkamai Nuea – Northern Ekkamai near Klong Tan Railway Station and Wat Phasi Pier

Sri Rat Line – 16.5 km

- 1) Chaeng Watthana – near Muangthong Thane
- 2) Samakkhee – Samakkhee Road
- 3) Wat Bua Kwan
- 4) Ngam Wong Wan – Ngam Wong Wan Road
- 5) Ministry of Public Health
- 6) Pracha Nukoon – the place where the expressway intersects with Ratchadaphisek Inner Ring Road and Prachachuen Road
- 7) Km.11 Railway Community – connects with SRT Red Line at Km 11. Station
- 8) Mochit 2 – New Mochit Bus Terminal
- 9) Bang Sue – connects with MRTA Blue Line at Bangsue Station
- 10) Sam Sen – near Samsen Witthayalai High School
- 11) Ministry of Finance
- 12) Rong Krong Nam – Samsen Water Purifier Factory
- 13) Victory Monument – connects with MRTA Orange Line and Skytrain at Victory Monument

Commentary from Wisarut:

I attended the OCMLT seminar about mass transportation in Bangkok metropolitan and surrounding areas at the UN Convention Center near Rachdamnoen Boxing Stadium on October 4, 2000. I got some good stuff in the report I will share with you. First of all, I obtained several colorful maps of the revised masterplan drafts. Even though it's a draft but it'll give you some good insights about the plan which next governments should follow:

1) The previous 1994 masterplan had some flaws in that it should have had circumferential patterns instead of just radial patterns. The radial patterns will make the urban areas grow in all directions in a random manner—a nightmare for the urban planners and the citizens.

Another flaw is about the concentration in downtown area while neglecting the suburb people due to the termination of Hopewell project which was supposed to be a backbone of the mass transit line.

2) The revival of Hopewell project is a critical process to create the mass transit backbone so it gets priority – second only to the MRTA Blue Line. However, the revised Hopewell project carry only commuter trains due to economic constrains. Even though the initial Hopewell revival plan states that the Rangsit-Hua Lamphong line will have to be done in 2006, it has a plan to extend to Nong Ngoo Hao Airport by the year 2011.

The thorniest issue for the revival plan is about the construction from Bangsue to Hua Lamphong and from Yommarat to Makkasan since both sections are in the 25 sq km restricted area that forces all mass transit lines to go underground. However, the financial analyzers said that the cost of putting both sections underground may be too high for both public and private sectors to deal with—let alone to put all sections underground. Furthermore, the engineers said it will be really hard if not impossible to implement both sections underground. In such circumstance, the line may have to go elevated—like it or not. However, the environmentalists said that the 25 sq. km restriction must be in place and never be modified at all costs. The engineer said if it is necessary to construct an underground tunnel, the tunnel must be semi-underground which will cut Mahanak Canal into 2 sections. Digging deeper would cause construction costs to skyrocket to levels not worthy to invest in. Therefore, elevated structure are the only option left.

IMHO, I think if the underground tunnel has a prohibitive construction cost, I would ask them to invest in the flyover and tunnel construction as well as traffic restrictions to ensure that the ground level tracks will never cross over the roads in both areas (Padiphat Road, Phayathai Road, Phetburi Road or so) in the same way that the current SRT railway does now.

3) The Purple line was initially a light rail project which will become a supplementary heavy rail if Hopewell does not work out. The revised plan states that the purple line will never be mentioned again until the year 2021 (next 21 years). It may take until the year of 2030 to implement this line.

4) MRTA blue line will have to be readjusted to become a circle subway-skytrain line by adding an elevated extension from Bang Sue to Tha Phra via Pracharat Sai 2 and Charansanitwongse Road (inner Ring Road).

This will increase the efficiency to pick up the passengers in Thonburi side of Bangkok. In Phase 2, Bang Yai extension and Southern Circumference extension will be included.

5) The revised master plan decides to scrap the Nong Ngoo Hao extension of BTS Skytrain since BTSC declines to pursue it. Therefore, the Skytrain will expand in the following manner:

- 5.1) Eastern Extension from Onnut to Pak Nam via Sukhumvit Road
- 5.2) Northern extension from Lum Lookka via Phaholyothin Road and Lum Lookka Road, with the shortcut through Km.26 Village)
- 5.3) Southern extension from Taksin Bridge to Talad Ploo (near Ratchadaphisek Road) and Bang Waek (Southern Bangkok Transportation Center) to connect with MRTA Blue Line via Krung Thonburi and Taksin-Phetkasem road

After 2021, Skytrain will have to go underground from National Stadium to Pin Klao area via Rama I Road.

6) Three transportation centers will spring up – Northern Center at Mochit, Southern Center at Talad Ploo-Bang Waek and Eastern Center at Makkasan

7) The 11 feeder lines will be scrapped except the 3 feeder lines along the expressways which will become tram bus lines without rails. BMTA bus will readjust the routes to ensure that they will cover the lines which are supposed to be light rail feeders (except the lines along canals which may cause flooding during the rainy season and pollution).

8) Financial considerations – The elevated structure constructed by the government and the service private sector is the best deal. The license plate tax, property tax, and car license to pass through 123 sq. km. restricted area (area along Ratchadaphisek) will be introduced to finance the projects via Mass Transit Funds.

The plan phase will be as follows:

Phase 1 (2001 – 2010): 110 km – with budget of 180 billion baht

- 1) Bangsue – New Bangkok International Airport (SRT)
- 2) Hua Lamphong – Bangsue (SRT)
- 3) Bangsue – Rangsit (SRT)
- 4) Hua Lamphong – Bang Waek (MRTA)
- 5) Bangsue – Tha Phra (Northwestern Circumferential Line – MRTA)
- 6) Taksin Bridge – Bangkok Southern Transportation Center (BTSC)
- 7) Onnut – Samut Prakarn (BTSC)

Phase 2 (2011 – 2020): 160 km – with budget of 280 billion baht

- 1) Hua Lamphong – Bangkok Southern Transportation Center (SRT)
- 2) Bangsue – Talingchan (SRT)
- 3) Bangkok Southern Transportation Center – Mahachai (SRT)
- 4) Bangsue – Phra Nang Klao Bridge – Bang Yai (Western Outer Ring Road – MRTA)
- 5) Tha Phra – Bon Kai (Southern Circumferential Line – MRTA)
- 6) Bang Waek – Bang Khae (Western Outer Ring Road – MRTA)
- 7) Mochit – Saphan Mai – Lum Lookka (BTSC)
- 8) Minburi-Huay Kwang (MRTA Orange Line)
- 9) Lad Phrao – Bangna (new Line – going along Lad Phrao Road, Sri Nakharin Road and Bangna-Chonburi Highway and connect with BTSC at Bangna – should belong to MRTA since it starts from Lad Phrao Station)

Phase 3 (Beyond 2021)

- 1) Talingchan – Nakhon Pathom (SRT)
- 2) National Stadium – Pin Klao (BTSC)
- 3) Huay Kwang – Samrong Tai (MRTA Orange Line)

Those 3 phases are for the case of high investment. However, the following readjustments can be as follows:

Plan 1: Alternative Consolidated System in 2021

- 1) MRTA Orange Line extends from Samrong Tai along Southern Outer Ring Road and turns left to go along Sri Nakharin Road to Bang Kapi to become another circumference line.
- 2) MRTA Northern Blue Line extends from Phra Nang Klao Bridge to Bang Bua Thong via Rattanakibet and Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road.
- 3) MRTA Southern Blue Line extends from Bang Waek to Bang Kae via Phetkasem Road.
- 4) BTSC Green line extends from Saphan Mai to Lum Looka via Phaholyothin and Lum Lookka Road.
- 5) SRT red Line will extend from Machachai to Mae Klong
- 6) SRT red Line will extend from Yommarat to Talingchan
- 7) Yellow Line will run from Lad Phrao to Bang Kapi

Plan 2: Further alternative if the economic condition still at a low level in 2021

- 1) MRTA Northern Blue Line ends up at Phra Nang Klao bridge
- 2) MRTA Southern Blue Line ends up at Bang Wa
- 3) MRTA Orange Line runs from Minburi to Thai Cultural Center
- 4) BTSC Sukhumvit line will run from Saphan Mai to Samut Prakarn
- 5) BTSC Silom line will run from National Stadium to Pin Klao
- 6) SRT red Line will extend from Machachai to Mae Klong
- 7) SRT red Line will extend from Yommarat to Talingchan
- 8) Yellow Line will be suspended

At the same time, OCMLT asks ETA to come up with electric tram buses (the same kind as the ones used in SF, or so) running along the expressways as a replacement to the light rail projects ETA has proposed since it is much cheaper to construct, operate, and maintain.

IMHO, I agree with OCMLT but those feeder must make the following transits to major lines:

- 1) Chaloem Mahanakhon line – feeding the MRTA Blue line at Bon Kai, MRTA Orange line at Rat Boorana
- 2) Chalong Rat line – feeding the MRTA Orange line at Sri Wara, SRT Red line at Klong Tan
- 3) Sri Rat – feeding SRT Red Line at km11 community, MRTA Blue line at Bangsue and Skytrain at Victory Monument

Furthermore, we need to construction flyovers for the tram buses or U-turn for the cars to ensure smooth traffic flow.

There are some debates whether SRT Northern corridor or the Lumlookka extension is the better line for the northern corridor. SRT line has some disadvantages that it goes through less dense area but Green line will not cover some critical areas.

The upcoming OCMLT seminar in this December will come up with the station names and location of stations to optimize the operating profits for all of those lines as well as the plan to get the cabinet approval. However, it is much better deal if OCMLT can ask all the political parties to honor the obligation so they plan can be implemented and executed without delays.

Samak's Idea Can Fit into the OCMLT Plan

New Master Plan Connecting Mass Transit Lines Head to Head

Thairath Daily, August 21, 2000

Mr. Khamrob-luck Suratsavadee, deputy of the Traffic Committee said that according to the second draft of the revised master plan, Bangkok mass transit will consist of 4 major lines – Blue (MRTA), Green (BTSC), Red (SRT), and Orange (MRTA) – with Blue line extension which can become a loop line connecting mass transit lines in Bangkok and Thonburi. However, the new master plan will emphasize the Thonburi side of BMA due to the heavy traffic in that area. Furthermore, there will be a new line to make the mass transit networks become more complete—a Yellow line from Bangsue, Lad Phrao, Sri Nakharin, Bangna.

Mr. Khamrob-luck said the consultant company proposed that BMTA should run buses along the mass transit network to make people feel familiar with the routes. If the Traffic Committee accepts the second draft, the company will submit the final draft of the study report containing details about stations and other related information on those lines in four months' time. After the Traffic Committee approves the final draft,

they'll forward it to the Cabinet to approve the master plan. The consultant company expects that if the cabinet approves the master plan and constructs all of the mass transit routes, those lines will carry 7-8 million passengers a day (50% of the BMA traffic volume which is about 16 million trips a day).

OCMLT called 3 BMA Governor Candidates to Discuss the New Master Plan –

Rail Transport

Thairath, May 17, 2000

Pol. Maj. Yongyut Sarasombut, secretariat of Traffic Management Committee has invited the three BMA Governor candidates (Col. Winai Somphongse, Mr. Tawat Satjakul, and Ms. Sudarat Keyuraphan) to join a brainstorming session to revise the mass transit system due to the continuing economic downturn. The light rail option may be too costly to implement, so a bus way may be a substitute. The bus way will run on lanes 30 cm higher than normal traffic lanes. Furthermore, OCMLT has discussed with SRT the Mae Klong Line Development and Suburb Commuter (the revived Hopewell project) to be implemented on the abandoned Hopewell structure.

GOVERNOR ELECTION

Sudarat promises electric buses

Project to cost 25% of elevated train

Bangkok Post, May 16, 2000

Sudarat Keyuraphan has pledged to provide Bangkok commuters with electric buses at “affordable” construction costs and fares if she is elected governor in July.

The project, under which nine bus routes will use existing roads, epitomizes what Mrs Sudarat has declared as her principles: using existing resources and working to the best of her ability to solve problems in the current situation wherein the country is low on money.

This would not be a mega-project, Mrs Sudarat said yesterday.

The nine routes would bring commuters from northern, southern, eastern and western suburbs into inner city areas where they could make use of the mass transit systems, she said.

To ensure access to the buses for people living in alleys or housing estates located off the main roads, public vans would be arranged, she said.

The nine routes include

- 1) Don Muang to Yomraj (along Local Road from Donmuang to Yomraj);
- 2) Ram Indra to Ekkamai (Along Ram Indra-Atnarong Expressway);
- 3) Bang Kapi-Lat Phrao-Mor Chit (Along Lad Phrao Road);
- 4) Pattanakan-Sri Nakharin-Pratunam (Local Road from Makkasan Station to Hua Mark and then going to Jusco Sri Nakharin);
- 5) Pattanakan-Sri Nakharin (from Jusco Sri Nakharin to Pattanakan Intersection via Pattanakan Road);
- 6) Sri Nakharin-Bang Na-Trat (from Jusco Sri Nakharin to Bangna Trat Highway via Seacon Square);
- 7) along Phetchakasem road (from Wongwian Yai to Bangkhae);
- 8) Phetchakasem-Pin Klao bridge (along Charansanitwongse and Pinklao Road), and
- 9) along Rama 3 road (rom Chong Nonsee to Thanon Tok).

Total construction cost would be around two billion baht, or 25-30 million baht per kilometer, she said, adding that on some roads where construction could begin immediately the electric buses could be in service in two years.

Mrs Sudarat said the electric bus system had a number of advantages.

No land expropriation would be required and construction would not take long because the system would be built on existing roads. The entire cost would be about 25% of the elevated train. Fares would not be higher than those of air-conditioned buses operated by the Bangkok Mass Transit Authority and traveling time would be twice as fast as ordinary buses.

It has not yet been decided, however, whether the city administration or the private sector would manage the electric buses, she said. The new transport system would also accommodate another project designed to devolve the prosperity of Bangkok's central business districts to the suburbs.

Mrs Sudarat said she plans to develop 11 outer Bangkok areas as sub-centers where jobs will be created for local communities based on their own potential so people would not have to commute to their places of work in the inner city.

MOTC Unveils the Bangkok Metropolitan Transportation Hub Will Invest 20 Billion Baht to Construct Hua Lamphong 2

Manager Daily, May 1, 2000

Ministry of Transportation is going to reduce the work load for Hua Lamphong—turning about 2000 rai around Bangsue Junction, Phaholyothin Warehouse and Chatuchak to connect MRTA, BTS, Morchit 2, and the High Speed Rail together with a budget of 22,168 million baht from private sector who will rent 600,000 sq.m. area for administration. This project will be in 3 phases and finish within 10 years.

The meeting on April 10 resulted in a master plan to construct the Bangkok Metropolitan Transportation Hub in the area around Bangsue Junction, not far from Chatuchak Park. After that, Hua Lamphong will become a memorial station. This project will follow the plan to privatize SRT into 3 companies—the rail & signal construction and maintenance section which will belong to the government, and two other private companies to manage the SRT railway systems and services and manage SRT properties.

If everything goes according to plan, SRT will get 30 billion baht back with profits of 7,832 million baht. Chatuchak Weekend market and Central Ladphrao land belongs to SRT which the private firms pay rent for at the rate of about 10,000-100,000 baht/sq.m.

There will be four construction zones:

1) Transit Concourse – the Main building to connect transportation centers such as the Bus Terminal, SRT Central Terminal, Park and Ride, High Speed Rail Terminal, Phaholyothin City Air Terminal, Monorail Station, and Community Railway of BTS (if BTS is going to take over Hopewell using Chinese Government money). The building will emphasize energy conservation with the natural air conditioning. Government will construct all the mass transit transfer stations on 366,000 sq.m. with an investment budget of 3926 million baht.

2) Bus Terminal – the rest area for arrivals and departures from Bangkok with buses that come to the station every 10-15 minutes, underground parking lots, and a shopping center. The upper part will become a tower with hotel and offices. The central section will be the main bus concourse with natural air conditioning and a green zone. After the first zone is complete, the private sector will develop this section. The government will pay 7,794 million baht to construct the passenger terminal, office buildings, and hotels in a 841,000 sq.m. area.

3) Park and Ride – a parking lot to connect the mass transit systems and Morchit 2 Bus Terminal as well as the Transit Concourse and Bus Terminal. The government will invest 6,838 million in the area of 1,080,000 sq.m. to create the recreational and commercial area and allow private concessions to invest and manage.

4) SRT Central Terminal – New Bangsue Railway Station with the connection to all transportation systems and other buildings. The building will be an open area with the areas for arrivals and departures (in the same way as an airport). The government will invest 3,610 million baht to develop this 331,000 sq.m. zone.

All 4 zones will have an area of 2,618,000 sq.m. and will take 10 years to finish. Now it is in the study and project design phase and will need cabinet approval first. The construction will start in 2001 and be in three phases:

2001 – 2003: Main Transit Concourse Construction by upgrading Bangsue Junction for the MRTA Blue line, with basic infrastructure and new railway line for new Bangkok railway station

2004 – 2007: The development of Bus Terminal, part of Main Transit Concourse, part of Park and Ride connecting the 2nd stage expressway

2008 – 2010: Construction of the New Central Railway Station, part of the Park and Ride connecting the 2nd stage expressway and Park and Ride. The Roof of Park and Ride will become a theme park.

If the area is at maximum utilization, the daily passengers will total 500,000—with 970,000 arrivals a day. The passenger ratio between mass transit: private car: Taxi will be 55:35:10.

Samak Reveals His Policies Concerning Bangkok Transport

excerpted from *Daily News* April 26, 2000

Mr. Samak Suthoravet, an Bangkok political veteran, spoke about his plans to improve the quality of life for Bangkokians during his lecture at a seminar hosted by Economic Department, University of Thai Chamber of Commerce on April 25.

Mr. Samak mentioned the plan to deal with the development of Bangkok mass transit systems as follows:

1) Extend the Southern Section of MRTA Blue Line from Hualamphong to Om Noy district of Samut Sakhon (Mahachai) via Phetkasem Road – not just Bangkhuae as MRTA originally planned

- 2) Extend the Northern Section of MRTA Blue Line from Ban Sue to Bang Yai Intersection (Kanchanaphesek Outer Ring Road) via Rattana-thebet Road, not just Sanambinnam (the foot of Phranangklaio Bridge in Eastern Bank) as MRTA planned
 - 3) Construct the Maintenance Center in a suburb area and convert Huay Kwang Maintenance Center (MRTA) to a park. However, he admits that it is too late to make a change since MRTA has already constructed a maintenance facility in that area
 - 4) Extend the BTS Southern Extension to Samut Prakarn (Paknam) via Sukhumvit Road – not just at Crocodile Curve (Khong Jorakhe), Samrong Tai as BTSC planned – with Park and Ride facilities of course! (Note: Actually, there is a park and ride facility at Onnut Station managed by Asiapark – 10 baht an hour and 30 baht a day during the promotion.)
- Furthermore, Mr. Samak made a proposal that BMA should take over the BTSC so BMA can lower the Skytrain fare from maximum 40 baht (US\$1) to a 20 baht flat rate (US\$ 0.50), and thus boost passengers up to the target of 400,000 a day instead of just 130,000 passengers a day as it is at present
- 5) Impose an automobile control zone in the inner city in same way Singapore does

New Transport Master Plan Underway

March 9, 2000

OCMLT told both AEI (the company that wants to construct the high speed train from Pak Tho to Donmuang) and MRTA (they want to revitalize the Hopewell project – BTSC's subsidiary) to wait until the revised master plan for mass transit projects is finished in eight months. During that time, OCMLT asks all the companies involved in ongoing and proposed mass transit projects to cooperate with one another so they can share the rails and depots as well as other facilities to reduce construction costs. The economic downturn and the collapse of Hopewell project has caused OCMLT to come up with a revised master plan to replace the one approved by the cabinet on September 27, 1994. We can assume this new plan will be ready to present to the public in early 2001.

[Mass Transit News main page](#)

Gem scam account: Not Again

October 1, 2000

Categories: Gem Scam

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Gem scam account: Not Again...

– October, 2000

Still more victims of the Gem scam come forward... (It appears that TGJ Thai Center Co., Ltd has reopened as the Blue Sapphire Gem Co., Ltd. at the same address!)

Hello,

My name is (name withheld) and I was just reading your articles on the blue sapphire gem scams. I have just returned from my vacation in Thailand yesterday and I too fell victim to the same scam listed in these articles. I was sure of it the day after I purchased the jewelry and I went to the Tourist Police. Needless to say I wasn't able to do anything in time before I returned back home to the United States. I am in the process of having the jewelry appraised and I know it will not be worth anywhere near what I paid for it. I was reading the new article you have posted which says the TGJ Thai Center Co., Ltd is currently being investigated but they closed down their shop and are presumed to have opened under a new name. I believe the shop that scammed me may be this same shop. In looking at the copy of the certificate of authenticity for the jewelry, the guarantee reads word for word as the one that was given to me. Also, I do not have the business card with me (it is at home) but I believe the address of the TGJ Thai Center Co., Ltd. is the same as the address of the shop I bought from which is called the Blue Sapphire Gem Co., Ltd.

When I went to the Tourist Police they actually brought in the Assistant Manager of the store and I spoke to him for a while. He said without the jewelry in hand he could only give me 10,000 Baht...I paid 80,000 Baht. So he put in writing that if I had it appraised at home and it wasn't worth what I paid he would make up the difference. But of course now that I am back in the US I don't know what I can do about it. Is there any way you can help me? Or how can I further pursue this? I can write again with further details of how I was scammed and the names of the jewelry store employees if it will help any. Thank you very much.

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Gem scam account: Another experience that's not quite like the rest

November 1, 2000

Categories: Gem Scam

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Gem scam account: Another experience that's not quite like the rest – end of November, 2000

I just returned from thailand after what turned out to be a rather hellish 10 day adventure and my japanese friend and I had quite an experience with the blue sapphire gem scam. Basically the scam transpired in exactly the same way as has been related in the many other articles ive read about it both on your site and numerous others, however the outcome of our scam turned out to be quite a bit more positive thanks to some early sceptiscism some help from the gods and the information posted on your site.

After we'd had the interesting experience of the scam, the people, the temples and the duk duk drivers, we returned happy in the assumption that we would soon be making some money and paying for a bit of our college education. However after about an hour the spell of these amazingly artful and intelligent scammers began to quickly wear off and I felt overwhelmingly alarmed at my utter stupidity and naivete. So i went downstairs and into the little internet cafe on the first floor of our hotel and promptly typed in gems+scam+thailand and low and behold 1000s of hits popped up with your site at the top of the list. So i began reading in earnest. Found out we'd probably lost all our money and with luck would get half of it back if we acted fast. So i called the tourist police and went down there immediately after gathering up my friend who had been duped with me.

As we had mailed our 'jewels' back home that day we knew first we had to get them back so after talking to the tourist police and making sure to plead our plight to the officer as well as express our disillusionment regarding thai hospitality, the officer offered to take us to the airport and pick up our goods after calling ahead and finding out that they had yet to be loaded on to a plane. At this time he began asking us what amount of recourse we would be happy with recieving which made us think that he was interested in a bit of the reward and after asking us to not mention that the police were aiding us to the criminals or anyone else we felt sure that there was some strange symbiotic relationship going on between the tourist police and the gem gangs (this was confirmed the next day when i went to the US embassy to ask them what to do and who to trust). In any case after a hectic ride in the back of the police van to the airport and back and not a bit of genuine fear for our lives the officer asked us to keep the gems in his office.

When we declined (at this point we felt we could trust no one but eachother) he became a bit annoyed and declared that he was 'tired of our case' so we payed him 500 baht for being so kind and helping us out even though we werent sure exactly what his intentions were and he dropped us off somewhere in the middle of bangkok after we told him repeatedly that we did NOT want to go to patpong and pick up hookers to make ourseneglves feel better.

Before we left we made an appointment with him for the next day to negotiate a refund. That night, needless to say i slept little and the next morning realized i really didnt trust the tourist police so I found the us embassy and my japanese friend and i went there. I entered and asked the embassy staff what to do. They gave me an information sheet about possibilities for recovering lost goods and when I asked about whether the tourist police could be trusted the woman helping me smiled and shook her head before wishing me luck, (as a side note, when we picked up the gems in the airport we were handed a paper about manat soiploy but when we asked the tourist police officer about this he promptly confiscated the paper and refused to give it back to us).

Finally we decided that we had no choice but to go back and honor our appointment with the tourist police in the hopes of getting some portion of our money back because later that day we had plans to board a train to chang mae and after that would not be returning again to bangkok. Then we realized that because we had made our transactions by credit card we might still be able to cancel. So first we went to the meeting where i commented to the manager that he ran quite a brilliant scam (in front of the police) he just nodded agreeably, smiled and began laughing.

After that we actually had quite an interesting, friendly conversation about politics for 10 minutes or so then he left brought us our money and that was that. However the story doesnt end there. After this we went and cancelled all our credit card transactions (we were still unsure that this would work and had no intention to bring about the outcome that came about) from the day before hoping that we would be able to pull it off but somewhat consoled that we had recovered at least half our money and feeling as though we had learned some great lessons about life in general and the rest of the world outside the protective bubble of japan.

As it turned out all the credit card transactions were easily cancelled because it seems mastercard has had its customers experience these deals repeatedly and is quite supportive of us pitiful fools. So as it turns out, by sheer dumb luck my friend and I ended up scamming the scammers and each of us made a whopping 400 US dollars off of those dirty bastards. Its not quite the profit that they promised us upon buying the gems but quick action and the wonderful information on your website ensured us a nice profit off of those buggers.

I just wanted to share this experience with everyone else to say that it isnt completely hopeless – if you act fast you can get ur money back. Also that the tourist police are not so trustworthy as you seem to make out. And finally to say that well – i know this is silly but – score one for the dumb tourists!!

[Return to Gem Scam main page](#)

Early Bangkok Subway Photos 1999-2000

December 1, 2000
Categories: Subway

May, 1999-December, 2000

Subway Entrances Under Construction
December, 2000



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Two views of the subway entrances at the Ladphrao Station.

Jatujak
Subway Station
November, 2000



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Left – Northeast corner of Kamphaengphet Road and Kamphaengphet 2 Road – massive construction site of the main part of Jatujak Station

Right – Northwest corner of Kamphaengphet Road and Kamphaengphet 2 Road – corner of Jatujak Station with Jatujak Market in the background

Construction
Work on Ratchadapisek Road
June, 2000



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

In the foreground is Ratchadapisek Road.
Behind it is the subway service spur that leads to the depot.
Phoebus Disco is the domed building to the right.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Construction continues along Ratchadapisek Road.

Dirt is hauled out of holes and in the background stacks of tunnel sections
wait to be installed.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)
Dirt is moved from a pit to a removal area.

MRTA publicity photos
Courtesy MRTA



Tunnel under Ratchadapisek Road. Note the concrete sections that make up the walls.



Concrete sections for the tunnel wall.



Four stories below street level in a station under construction.

Construction Work on Ratchadapisek
Road
May-June-July, 1999
(Photos: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo:
2Bangkok.com)

Left – Installing the hanging road surface at Ratchadapisek-Suthisarn intersection. Once in place the dirt underneath will be cleared away.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Right – Detail of the hanging road surface



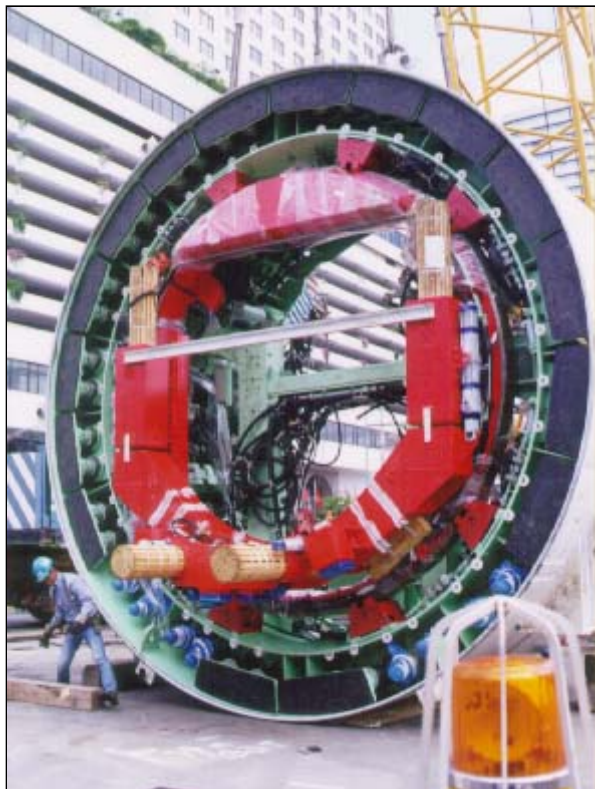


(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Left – Part of the tunnel boring machine (TBM) ready to be lowered down into the subway excavation area at the Au-sor-mor-thor intersection (intersection of Ratchadapisek and Rama 4 Roads).

Center – Two cranes ready to lift the tunnel boring machine

Right – Two cranes lifting the assembled tunnel boring machine into an upright position





Left – Closeup of the tunnel boring machine

Right – The massive digger blade ready to be attached



Left – Rolling cranes on Ratchadapisek Road that can be maneuvered to lower and raise materials from the excavation site below the road. Massive cranes and steel supports are being installed round the clock.



Right – Something being lowered into one of the holes. The bus is riding across a metal bridge that covers the underground work site.

One Year On – Various Skytrain Photos

December 1, 2000

Categories: Skytrain



November-December, 2000



At long last, feeder buses for the Skytrain



Advertising placards on the stairs up to the platform level



Ride free on the Skytrain's one year anniversary
(December 5, 2000-also HM The King's Birthday and a national holiday)



Christmas in a Skytrain station



View from the train: Erawan Shrine at the Grand Hyatt
Erawan



View from the train: Srapaduma Palace behind
Siam
Center



View from the train: Royal Bangkok Sports Club (a golf course in the middle of the city—formerly an airport some 80 years ago)



View from the train: [Siam Intercontinental Hotel](#) with Bayoke II Tower in the background



View from the train: Wat near Taksin Station and courts building in the background



Mammoth Siam Square Station straddling the road below



Stairs from the upper to lower platforms at
Siam Square Station (this station is where the two lines cross)



Interchange at Siam Square Station at dusk

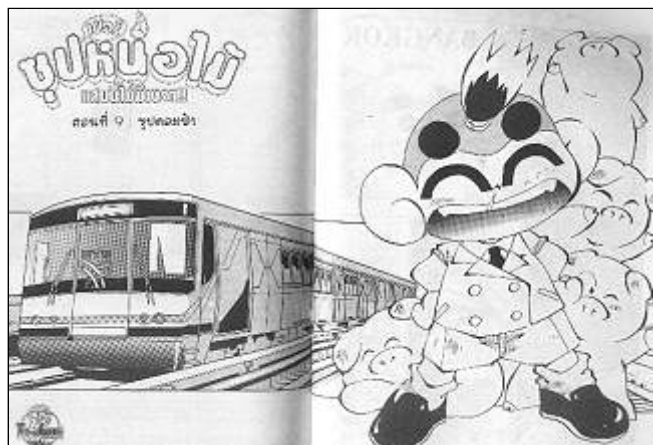
Skytrain News 2000

December 31, 2000
Categories: Skytrain



Entrance to the Skytrain. In the bottom right corner is a boy about to go on the escalator (there's a wild bull in his black backpack).

Cartoon Skytrain



2001 – This isn't really news, but is interesting nonetheless. Local cartoonist Adisuk Pongsumpan has created a continuing series in the comic *Neoz* that transpires on the Skytrain. The antics include a girl named *Kwang* (a common name meaning deer—she has antlers in the cartoon) who has heard there is electricity under the train to make it go and is thus afraid to touch the floor of the train. There is also a boy who brings a wild bull and an army of pigs on the train.



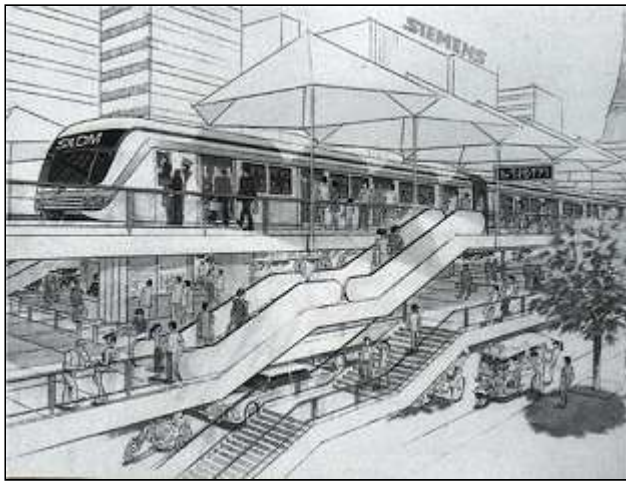
Cartoonist
Adisuk
Pongsumpan



More Skytrain Ephemera – January, 2001 – BTS published this nifty booklet with detailed maps of the areas and businesses around each Skytrain station. The layout is really nicely done. On one side of the book is the Thai version and on the back cover is the English version. Available at the Skytrain stations (while supplies last) with the purchase or refill of a 500 baht ticket.



(Photo: 2Bangkok)
Cover of the first
Skytrain Map
issued February



Cool! May, 2001 – An anonymous reader emailed us this very early Skytrain design concept sketch. The final design looked nothing like this.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

One of the first Skytrain commercial tie-ins– 1999

Dunkin' Donuts packaged its Munchkins (donuts) in a long box shaped like the BTS Skytrain. The Thai part reads, "The first Skytrain in 1999".

Hawkers occupying the Skytrain stairways

BTSC asks BMA for immediate help

– *Thairath Daily*, December 18-19, 2000

Hawkers are occupying Skytrain stairways in 6-7 stations and vagabonds are hanging around the stations and sexually harassing female passengers. BTSC has asked BMA to solve these problems.

BMA correspondents said BMA received the letter from BTSC about the problems around the stations in November 2000. The letter said passengers had complained that:

- 1) There were lots of hawkers obstructing the stairways at Saladaeng, Thong Lo, Siam, Ratchathewee, Nana, and Victory Monument stations
- 2) Vagabonds at Ekkamai Station (Wat Thatthong side) are panhandling and sexually harassing ladies who walk alone around the station.
- 3) Hawkers at Victory Monument have stolen 300 stainless steel covers of sewage drains not far from the walkway installed by BTSC with a price of 180,000 baht sell to junk yards. The company has to replace them with the 300 welded cast iron covers which will cost the company 60,000 baht.

These problem will worsen the situation during an emergency evacuation. Therefore, BTSC asks BMA, Ratchathewee District Officer, and Bang Rak District Officer to solve those problems. BMA said they will set a prohibition zone of 10 meters from the stairways to ensure that the hawkers do not block the pathways and stairways.

10-baht Microbus is a hit – Going to Open 2 More Lines in Early February 2001

– *Thairath Daily*, December 21, 2000

Miss Pornthip Naranonkittikul, CEO of Bangkok Microbus Co.Ltd. said that after starting the first 4 microbus lines to feed the Skytrain with a ticket price of 10 baht and a guarantee of seats, the company found that Microbus No.11 (Prachaniwet 3 – Mochit Station) is the most popular line. The company will make an assessment for about a month before opening a few more lines such as Donmuang-Mochit and Tha Phrachan – Siam in early February 2001.

Miss Pornthip said the company has issued two types of coupon books – a small one with 10 coupons (220 baht) and a big one with 50 coupons (1000 baht) as a discount to normal ticket fee of 25 baht since December 1, 2000. The company found that there is such strong demand for big coupon books that the company has to issue them without limit during the new year season. The coupon books are sold in Bangkok Microbus Co. Ltd. (Vibhavade and Sri Nakharin Branch), Chulalongkorn Book Center, Kasetsart University Book Center, and Ramkhamhaeng University Book Center and the Microbus inspectors inside the microbuses.

BTS say they didn't break the underground oil pipelines at Phyathai Station

BTSC's ready to start construction of extensions after receiving the cabinet approval

– *Thairath Daily*, December 28, 2000

BTSC say they did not break the pipeline of the Pipeline Transportation Co. Ltd. at

Phyathai Station on December 27, 2000 since the company had asked the Pipeline Transportation Co.Ltd. about the details three years ago and there were no problems during and after the Skytrain construction. BTSC said the pipeline company should investigate the actual causes of the broken pipeline which could have resulted from the land subsiding or vibration from the Eastern Railway and Phyathai Road. BTSC sent the construction plan to the Pipeline Transportation Co. Ltd. to check if the Skytrain construction caused the pipeline break down. There is no problem for the compensation since both Pipeline Transportation Co.Ltd. and BTSC bought insurance policies from the same insurance company.

Mr. Karun said that the cabinet had approved the start of construction of extensions without calling a new bid since they consider that the extensions are not the new lines, just additional services. Now, BTSC is going to discuss with BMA about the investment plan, the budget, and the ticket fees. So far, BTSC will start the construction of the Eastern and the Southern Extension with a distance of 11 km first. The Rama III Extension will be started after finishing the first two extensions. Furthermore, BMA will peruse the cabinet for the 3rd phase of extensions (Mochit-Lumlookka, Wongwian Yai-Mahachai, Thepharak-Bangplee).

BMA feels no confidence that BTSC can construct the Skytrain extensions

– *Thairath Daily*, December 13, 2000

The BMA Correspondent said that there was a committee meeting about the Skytrain extensions according to 1992 Joint Venture Act at the BMA City Hall. The committee said they had no confidence that BTSC would be able to construct the Skytrain extensions since the company is carrying a daily loss of 6 million baht (monthly loss of 180 million baht). Therefore, the committee will ask a consultant company to study whether BTSC will have much better financial support and security if the company decides to construct the extensions. Furthermore, there will be a study of how much the minimum and maximum ticket fees will be if BTSC decides to invest in all the extensions or if BTSC decides to make a joint venture with other companies to invest in all the extensions.

The committee decided that the Samrong extension (Onnut-Samrong) must be constructed first due to high population. After that, the Taksin Extension (Saphan Sathon-Taksin) would be built, and then the Rama III Extension (Chong Nonsee-Sathupradit). Even though the cabinet approves all three lines, but the construction cannot be started since BMTA is trying to pressure the cabinet to approve the plan to negotiate with contractors who have strong interests in the construction instead of calling a new bid to ensure that the Samrong extension will be done by December 2002.

Update-December 14, 2000 and still waiting for a route decision

Four Proposed Lines for the Skytrain Northern Extension (Mochit – Lum Lookka)

– *Thairath Daily*, Thursday December 7, 2000

Pol. Maj. Yongyut Sarasombut, OCMLT Secretariat, told the press that OCMLT has discussed with BTSC, MRTA, SRT, BMA, MOTC, the Governor of Pathumthanee Province, and the scholars about the best route for the Northern Extension of the Skytrain. The results are 4 preliminary and proposed routes which can be shown as follows:

- 1) From Mochit Station to Lum Lookka via Phaholyothin Road and Lum Lokkka road – proposed by the consultant company OCMLT hired, the one shown at the October OCMLT seminar
- 2) From Mochit Station and connect with Hopewell at Bangsue Station. After that the route will go along SRT railway by using the abandoned pillars as supports up to Donmuang Station and then turn right at RTAF HQ to Lum Lokka – proposed by OCMLT.
- 3) From Mochit Station to Ratchayothin Intersection via Phaholyothin Road and then turn right to go along Ratchadaphisek Inner Ring Road to Ratchada – Ladphrao Intersection to Saphan Song. After that, the line will go along Lad Phrao canal and Klong Song to Lum Lookka – Proposed by Governor Samak
- 4) From Mochit Station to Lum Looka via Phaholyothin Road up to Ratchayothin and then turn left along Ratchadaphisek inner ring road to Km11 Railways Community and then use Hopewell pillar to go to Donmuang before turning right to Lum Lookka.

The final decision about the route will come up on December 12, 2000. So far, the consultant company didn't point out which route is the best route for the Northern extension.

Therefore, OCMLT need to make another discussion regarding to the construction cost, distance, upcoming problems, and of course the economic returns and social effects – before making the final decision from the data 15 agencies deliver to OCMLT. Furthermore, the Northern extensions should connect with other mass transit systems such as Hopewell and MRTA. The suitable connection should be at Ngam Wongwan area – connecting with Hopewell at Bangkhen Station or so – since this will connect with the proposed expressway.

Notes: Going along Phaholyothin Road up to RTAF Academy and then turning right to Lum Lookka will be one of the best route except it requires the demolition of Senanikhom Flyover – the unacceptable thing for those who live from Kaset to Ratchayothin area. Using the abandoned Hopewell pillars is quite a nice idea even though more people live along Phaholyothin road those who live along Vibhavadee – Rangsit Highway. I hope they will come up with the optimal route that pick as many passengers as possible while minimizing social and environmental damage and of course traffic jams.

Nevertheless, OCMLT should have the BMTA bus route readjustment plan in their hands after realizing the final route for the Northern extension to ensure that when Northern extension becomes a reality, BTSC will have enough profit to break even and pay all the loan plus interests as soon as possible.

Commentary by Ron: Send the Skytrain up Phahonyothin and demolish the Senanikhom flyover. I work just north of Rachayothin intersection and drive to work each day. Everyone in this overpopulated and congested area seems to want the Skytrain to pass through. The traffic is often at a standstill already (much of which is due to the Major Rachayothin constructed with pathetically inadequate parking and nonexistent passenger loading zones). The flyover itself makes the street level dark, polluted, and cave-like even at midday. When it rains, cars driving overhead splash dirty water onto the sidewalks below. A sensible mass transit solution like the Skytrain may be the best solution, especially if this route can put the Skytrain in the black.

Four lines are ready to facilitate BTSC passengers

– *Thairath Daily*, Thursday November 30, 2000

Miss Pornthip Naranonkittikul, the CEO of Microbus Co. Ltd., said that the company will start 4 feeder lines for Skytrain passengers on December 1, 2000:

Special Airconditioned bus No. 9 – Bangbon – Saladaeng Station

Special Airconditioned bus No. 11 – Prachanivet 3 Village – Mochit Station

Special Airconditioned bus No. 13 – Paknam – Onnut Station

Special Airconditioned bus No. 14 – Ramkhamhaeng 2 (Bangna Campus) – Onnut Station

Each line will have 10 feeder buses and the passenger ticket is 10 baht with seats guaranteed. If there are lots of passengers, the company will consider expanding the feeder services.

Miss Pornthip said for the regular microbus services, the normal fee is 25 baht. However, the company suggests those who use the Microbus daily to buy a 220-baht coupon booklet (10 tickets each) and a 1000-baht coupon book (50 tickets each). The company cannot reduce the fee since the company has lots of expenses to deal with such as counter fees for the bank to count coins. Therefore, regular passengers should buy coupon books or booklets to get a big discount and facilitate fee collecting.

As for fare cards that can be used in both Skytrain and Microbus, it is pending in the BTSC committee.

Notes: There is an hourly feeder service from Mochit station to Muangthong Thanee which helps passengers in Chaeng Watthana area, especially those who live in Muangthong Thanee to ride the Skytrain. However, the most logical way is to ride the BMTA bus No. 52 or a van that goes to Mochit station. I hope that BTSC will approve the cards that can be used in both Skytrain and Microbus as soon as possible.

Samak pushing for Skytrain extensions to start this month and be completed in two years

– *Dailynews*, Tuesday December 5, 2000 (the 1st Year Anniversary for Skytrain Service)

Bangkok Governor Samak pushing for Skytrain extensions to start this month and be completed in two years. Furthermore, he asks BTSC to construct more Park & Ride facilities close to the stations

In the afternoon of December 4, 2000, Governor Samak Sunthoravet came to Phayathai station for the 1st anniversary of the Skytrain and said the Skytrain has alleviated traffic jams in

BKK but it is too short to reach the edges of Bangkok. Therefore, BMA will do its best to speed up the Southern and Eastern extensions to be done within 2 years. Now the process is stuck in the Cabinet to approve the contractor. However, Samak is still worried that BTSC may no longer be able to pay the annual 10% loan interests to the creditors. Therefore, it may be necessary for BMA to find another company to bail BTSC out of the financial troubles and find a way to ensure that the construction will start by the end of this month.

Governor Samak said BTSC is at the loss due to the fact that the routes have few facilities to connect the passengers of other modes of the land transportation. Therefore, he urges BTSC to find more places to construct park & ride facilities. The daily service fee should be 40 baht for each car.

Notes: I hope that the caretaking cabinet will approve the right contractor to ensure that the construction will be done and ready for service on December 5, 2002. Italian-Thai PCL is the old contractor of BTSC but the company's default on bond interest payments has pushed the company into financial trouble. Ch. Karnchang PCL is okay but the company should ensure that the MRTA stored-value tickets can be used in both Skytrain and Subway. Other contractors may have little chance to get into the extension project without the connection with either Italian-Thai PCL or Ch. Karnchan PCL.

Samak Urges Immediate Construction

– *Thairath Daily* – Vol. 51 No. 15628, November 4, 2000

Mr. Samak Sunthoravet (BMA governor) said that BTSC should start the construction of the BTS extensions immediately since the cabinet has already approved the extensions.

Furthermore, BTSC has strong and steady financial resources to do so after they joined Shanghai Metro Co. Ltd. in a new alliance. Therefore, it will be very bad deal if NESDB imposes a red tape by forcing BMA to call a new bid to construct these extensions instead of letting BTSC to construct them. Such red tape will delay the extension project by 7-8 months. Therefore, he will make an appointment to meet with Mr. Visanu Kruea-Ngam (the Cabinet Secretary).

For the extension project, the 9-km Eastern extension (Onnut-Samrong Tai) will be constructed first with a 300-meter corridor connecting BITEC with Udomsuk Station as well as hotels along the route to facilitate a physicians' group who will come to a convention at BITEC in the next two years. It will take 18 months to construct the Eastern extension. The Southern extension can be delayed since BTSC is running a feeder bus from Surasak Station to Wong Wian Yai.

Notes: Old Samak has hit the nail on the head! It would be much cheaper to construct a corridor connecting BTS stations with significant places (e.g. hotels, department stores, trade centers or so) than manipulating the route from the plan. NESDB should loosen up the red tape to ensure that the construction will be done on time.

BTS to issue tickets for Skytrain and Microbus in 2001

Skytrain gets lots of passengers even during the October school vacation

– *Thairath Daily* – Vol. 51, No. 15630, November 6, 2000

Mr. Karun Chanthrangsu, a BTSC committee member, said BTSC will issue tickets that can be used in both Skytrain and Microbus to facilitate mass transit connections. So far, BTSC and Microbus Co. Ltd. are discussing which Microbus lines will join this project, the lifetime of the connection ticket (either within a single day or a few day period), and ticket fees. If the negotiation goes as planned, the new tickets will be issued by Microbus and BTSC not later than January 2001.

Mr. Karun also said that the number of Skytrain passengers increased even during the vacation period of October–170,000 passengers a day at the beginning of vacation and 200,000 passengers a day on October 27, 2000. Such a phenomena shows that Bangkokians have become more willing to use Skytrain service instead of getting stuck in traffic jams. Therefore, BTSC will launch continuing campaigns. BTSC is going to discount ticket fees and issue free commemorative gifts on December 5, 2000–the first year anniversary of BTSC.

BMA-OCMLT joining to survey for the Northern BTSC Extension

– *Travel and Transportation Journal* – Vol. 4, No. 178

Monday November 6, 2000-Sunday November 12,2000

Samak is asking OCMLT to study the feasibility of the route for the Northern extension of the Skytrain. Pol. Maj. Yongyut Sarasombut replies that it will take a few months to study the details.

Mr. Samak Sunthoravet (BMA governor) said after the route survey for the Northern extension of Skytrain that this survey is merely a preliminary survey since there are four proposed routes which will take time for OCMLT to study before deciding on the final route.

So far, there are 4 proposed routes for the Northern Extension of Skytrain:

(1) Construction along Phaholyothin Road and then turning right to Lum Lukka with a construction cost of about 24 billion baht (about US\$600 million). (OCMLT proposed this route.)

(2) Using Hopewell Structure up to Prem Pracha Station and then going along the border of the BMA area and Klong Song with a construction cost of about 22 billion baht (about US\$550 million)

(3) Construction along Bang Sue, Lad Phrao, and Klong Song with a construction cost of 30 billion baht (US\$ 750 million). (Samak's proposed route)

(4) Construction along Phaholyothin Road and then turning right to Bang Khen station via Ngam Wongwan Road before going along Hopewell line with a construction cost of 25 billion baht (US\$ 625 million).

The thorniest issue for the Northern extension via Phaholyothin road is the section from Soi Sena Nikhom 1 (Phaholyothin 32) to Kasetsart University since it is necessary to demolish a 1.2km flyover. Local folks from Senanikhom to Kasetsart University may reject such a route since they have seen what happened to the folk living in the Saphan Kwai area after the demolition of a flyover.

Mr. Yongyut also said OCMLT is going to the engineering and financial feasibility, economic and environment impact, political support from BMA and the central government, and popular acceptability. So far, all 4 routes are technically feasible, but the financial feasibility is the next factor for the consideration. Construction along canals costs BMA 10-20% more than construction along Phaholyothin Road and 20-30% more than construction along Hopewell route. OCMLT will spend a few months studying the detail and writing a report before inviting BMA, MRTA, SRT to discuss the extension proposal.

Notes: With such preliminary information, Samak and BTSC should discuss with the SRT the proposal to construct the Northern extension on the Hopewell project partial revival (Bangsue-Rangsit). If SRT accepts the deal, it will be much easier to push the Northern project forward with the cheapest budget. Furthermore, BMA should discuss with the BMTA concerning the bus route readjustment to ensure that there will be some feeder to the Skytrain if Northern extension become reality.

Another view point is that an area along Phaholyothin Road has much higher population density than that of Vibhavadee Rangsit Highway. The higher construction costs will be balanced by the large number of passengers. We will wait and see the final decision about the Northern extension and the political support to ensure that it will become a reality within 10 years.

OCMLT proposes four routes for the Northern BTS Extension

– *Matichon Daily*, October 20, 2000

At 7am on October 19, 2000, the Bangkok Governor, the BMA Deputy Governor, the OCMLT Secretariat, and officers from BMA and OCMLT rode a boat from Wat Lad Phrao to go along Bang Bua, Thanon Canal to Klong Song (Canal 2) Watergate in Sai Mai District to make a survey of the route for BTS Northern Extension (Mochit-Lam Lookka).

Mr. Samak said OCMLT had made 4 proposed routes for the Northern BTS Extension:

1) Going along Phaholyothin Road to Kaset and then turning right to Kaset – Nawamin Road before turning left to go along Lad Phrao canal to Lam Lookka.

2) Sam Sen canal from Victory Monument to Klong Tan and then going along Saen Saeb and Lad Phrao Canal to Lam Lookka.

3) Going along Phaholyothin Road to Km 24 (Royal Thai Airforce Academy Curve) to Hok Wah Canal and ending up at Lam Lookka—a proposed route from the OCMLT October Seminar

4) Going along Vibhavadee Highway to Chokchai Ruam Mit Lane and then go to Bang Sue canal to Lad Phrao 48 Road (Phibool Upatham Lane) and Saphan Song area and then go along

Lad Phrao Canal to Lam Lookka–Samak’s proposed route

After the survey, OCMLT said the canal area is about 30 meters wide. Furthermore, it requires the raising of concrete pillars along the canal bank which necessitates the removal of 1-3 houses for each pillar. Samak responds that he will move those evicted families to his corn cob apartments not far from their old neighborhoods.

Mr. Samak said OCMLT will listen what OCMLT and other people say before making a final decision about the Northern extension since OCMLT is going to collect the data about passenger density, feasibility, and other necessary information.

Notes: Samak may be right to select such a route (the route along the canal) to avoid competition with BMTA buses. However, it would be very nice if the BTSC has designed station positions in the following manners:

- 1) To connect with MRTA Blue line at Ratchada Station
- 2) To connect with piers along Lad Phrao canal
- 3) To connect with BMTA bus stops so BMTA buses will feed the Skytrain. In such a case, BMTA needs to move its bus stops as close to the Skytrain station as possible.

BMA should also deal the following tasks to ensure that Skytrain will pick up as many passengers as possible:

- 1) Revive the boat line from Onnut to Saphan Mai via Klong Tan after it went out of service in 1999. The piers should be at the position to feed the mass transit lines if possible.

- 2) Ask the Correction Department (Krom Ratchathan) to send convicts to dig the Bang Khen and Premprachakorn canals deep and wide enough for express boats to run so that BMA will be able to open the new boat routes to feed Skytrain as well as other mass transit lines.

- 3) If Suvannabhum Airport (a new name of Nong Ngoo Hao Airport named by His Majesty The King) becomes a reality, BMA should run a boat service from Suvannabhum Airport to Donmuang Airport as a temporary measure to feed the passengers to both airports.

Furthermore, Nai Lert boat (from Pratoe Nam to Chachoeng Sao via Saen Saeb canal) and Nai Lert bus (from Yot Se to Pratoe Nam via Rama I Road) once fed Bang Lamphoo Tramway. These were a few good samples of [transportation networks during a good old days](#). Gee, could Samak make new networks resembling those networks in the past (before the 1960’s)? Probably, Bangkokians will have to do it on their own!

New Ad

There is a new ad from BTSC about 30-day passes for those who don’t travel as much (as opposed to the previous 30 trips pass):

	Number of trips	Pass Cost	Pass cost per trip
Student	10	160	16
Adult	10	250	25
Student	15	210	14
Adult	15	300	20
Student	30	360	12
Adult	30	540	18

– *Than Setthakij Business Newspaper*

September 21-23, 2000

According to a map in this article, Samak has proposed to extend Skytrain from Victory Monument to go along Sam Sen Canal (small canal near Victory Monument) to Klong Tan and then turn left to go along Lad Phrao canal to Sai Mai District (with a distance of 23.4 km) and then go along Klong Hok Wah 11 km more to Lum Lookka District. The net distance for the

Northern Extension is $24.5 + 11 = 35.5$ km

For the southern extension of the Skytrain, Samak has proposed that it should go along Krung Thonburi Road and then turn left to Taksin Road, passing Sam Reh, Mahai Sawan, Dao Khanong and then turn right to Jom Thong Road and then turn left at Jom Thong Station and go along Mahachai Railway to Mahachai. The total Distance will be $2.2 + 10 + 24.5 = 36.7$ km

For the eastern extension, it will go from Onnut and then turn left to BITEC at Bang Na Intersection. After reaching BITEC, the line will u-turn to Bang Na and then go along Sukhumvit Road to Thepharak Intersection and turn left to Bang Plee (at Bangplee-Ladkrabang Intersection). The total distance is 21.9 km.

The list of stations will be as follows:

Thepharak Extension – 21.9 km

E9 Bang Jak – Sukhumvit 62

E10 Thamm Mongkhon – Sukhumvit 101

E11 Udomsuk – Sukhumvit 103

E12 BITEC – Bangkok International Trade and Exhibition Center

E13 Bearing – Sukhumvit 107, Bangkok Boundary Pole

E14 Samrong – Sukhumvit 113, Wat Dan Samrong

E15 Thepharak – Thepharak Intersection

E16 Mahawong – Mahawong Canal

E17 Sri Nakharin – Sri Nakharin – Thepharak Intersection

E18 Bang Ping – Bang Ping canal

E19 Nam Daeng – Nam Daeng Market

E20 Bang Kaeo – near Outer Ring Road

E21 Srisuk – Srisuk Market

E22 Bang Plee – Bang Plee – Lad Krabang Intersection

Southern Extension 36.7 km

S7 Krung Thonburi – near Charoen Nakhon Intersection

S8 Wongwian Yai – Taksin – Krung Thonburi intersection near Wongwian Yai

S9 Samreh – Samreh Market

S10 Mahaisawan – Mahaisawan Intersection not far from Bangkok 2 Bridge

S11 Dao Khanong – near Dao Khanong canal

S12 Bang Khunthian – Bang Khuntian Market

S13 Jomthong – a community not far from Jomthong District

S14 Wat Sai – a temple that used to have a floating market but now the floating markets are in Damnoen Saduak, Tha Kha, and Taling Chan

S15 Wat Singha – a temple founded during the late Ayudhaya period

S16 Bang Bon – a community not far from Bang Bon district

S17 Kang Kheha – public housing set up by NHA in Bang Bon district

S18 Rang Sakae – probably corrupted from Bang Sakae, literally means a canal community with Sakae tree

S19 Rang Pho – probably corrupted from Bang Pho, literally means a canal community with a Pho tree

S20 Sam Yaek – literally means a 3-way intersection – probably a village near an intersection with Ekkachai Road or so

S21 Prom Daen – literally means the Border Line – the last station before coming out of Bangkok to Mahachai

S22 Bang Nam Juead – literally means a canal community of fresh water – the first station in Mahachai

S23 Khok Kwai – literally means a buffalo (or cattle) pen

S24 Ban Khom – literally Khmer village – used to be a Khmer community before being assimilated into Siamese society

S25 Klong Jak – literally means nipa palm canal – nipa palms usually grow in the area where salt and fresh water meet – mangrove tree area

S26 Mahachai – a terminal near Samut Sakhon Provincial Hall

Northern Extension 35.5 km

N9 Din Daeng – near Din Daeng Intersection

N10 Makkasan – Near Makkasan Railway Depot

N11 Rama 9 – Junction with MRTA Blue line at Rama IX Station

N12 RCA – Royal City Avenue, Entertainment area for yuppies in Bangkok

N13 Soi Soonwijai

N14 Ekkamai Nuea – Northern Ekkamai

N15 Saen Saeb – Saen Saeb canal near Rama IX pond

N16 Rama IX Temple – Rama IX Temple and Bangkok Japanese School

N17 Prachauthit – Prachauthit Road

N18 Janthima – Ladphrao 80 Road, a short cut to Ratchadaphisek and Ladphrao Road

N19 Saphan 2 – Lad Phrao Road near Chokchai 4 Road

N20 Wat Lad Phrao, Lad Phrao Buddhist temple

N21 Chandrakasem – near Rajabhat Institute of Chandrakasem (one of 36 teacher colleges in Thailand)

N22 Sena Nikhom – Phaholyothin 32 Road, a shortcut Lad Plakhao and Chokchai 4 via Wang Hin Intersection

N23 Lad Plakhao – near Kaset-Nawamin Road

N24 Bang Bua – near Wat Bang Bua, The 11th Infantry Regiment – Royal Guard

N25 Bang Khen – near Rajabhat Phra Nakhon, Chomchon Soi Kawee (Poem Lane Neighborhood)

N26 Saphan Mai – Sphan Mai Flee market

N27 Wat Ko – near Wat Ko and RTAF Housing

N28 Sai Mai – near RTAF Academy

N29 Khoo Khot – near Klong 2

N30 Wat sai Mai – near Klong 3

N31 Wat Klong Khan – near Klong 4

N32 Klong 5 – near Eastern Outer Ring Road

N33 Wat Prachum Ratsadorn – near Klong 6

N34 Lum Lookka – near Klong 7 and Lum Lookka District, the intersection between Lum Lookka and Nimit Mai Road

October 2000

Notes: If Samak successfully realizes the Southern Extension of the Skytrain to Mahachai, the list of station will be as follows:

S7 Krung Thonburi (AKA Charoen Nakhon) – the station will be on Krung Thonburi Road near Charoen Nakhon Intersection

S8 Wongwian Yai (AKA Wongwian Yai Railway Station) – the busiest circle in Thonburi side of Bangkok

S9 Talad Ploo (AKA Wat Pho Nimit) – one of the old trade centers in Thonburi

S10 Klong Ton Sai – literally means Banyan Tree Canal – a community in Thonburi

S11 Jomthong – a community not far from Jomthong District

S12 Wat Sai – a temple that used to have a floating market but now the floating markets are in Damnoen Saduak, Tha Kha, and Taling Chan

S13 Wat Singha – a temple founded during the late Ayudhaya period

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S21 Khok Kwai – literally means a buffalo (or cattle) pen

S22 Ban Khom – literally Khmer village – used to be a Khmer community before being assimilated into Siamese society

S23 Klong Jak – literally means nipa palm canal – nipa palms usually grow in the area where salt and fresh water meet – mangrove tree area

S24 Mahachai – a terminal near Samut Sakhon Provincial Hall

The distance from Wong Wian Yai to Mahachai is about 33 km and the distance from Taksin Bridge to Wong Wian Yai is about 2 km. Therefore, the total distance is about 35-36 km for the southern extension of the Skytrain.

The Skytrain Construction to Samroong Ready to Feed BITEC – Starting in this November

– *Dailynews*, Bangkok Metro Section, September 15, 2000

Bangkok Governor Samak ordered BTS to go forward with the construction of the Eastern extension (Onnut – Samrong) to feed BITEC (a convention center) in 18 months. BTS accepted the order, with a condition that BMA must be one of the investors of this extension project so BMA will share the construction debts with BTS. The Eastern extension will start on this November with a budget of 20 billion baht.

At 10:30 on September 14, Samak Sunthoravet, Bangkok governor came to Mochit Station to perform an opening ceremony for the escalator service. Samak told the press that this day was the first day he used the Skytrain service, and he praised the Skytrain service saying it was definitely clean, very comfortable and safe, with awesome scenes along the routes. Therefore, he decided to pursue OCMLT to put his these extensions with a total distance of about 100 km into the revised masterplan. So far, the consultant company hired by BMA is making a survey on all three routes.

Since the Skytrain has been approved to extend from Onnut to Samrong and Taksin Bridge to Wongwian Yai, Samak decided to order the BTS to extend it from Onnut to Samrong, with a modification to pick up passengers at BITEC due to its significance as an international convention and business center. The construction will begin in this November and finish in the next 18 months so it will be ready for service on the Coronation Day (May 5, 2002). BTSC will take charge of the construction and service. However, BMA and BTS will discuss and negotiate the financial responsibilities for this project.

Mr. Khiree Kanchanaphak, BTS CEO said the company is ready to construct this extension immediately since the company has financial resources to cover the project which is about 20 billion baht (US\$500 million). However, BTS would use only a fraction of that loan, and would ask BMA for the rest so BMA will share the construction costs with BTS and become an underwriter for BTS. BTS will also negotiate with BMA about the route and the feasibility to construct a detour to BITE as well as financial responsibility. BTS said it needed government support so BTS can realize the detour to BITEC.

So far, BTS now has enough revenue to feed itself: about 200,000 passengers a day is enough to cover the daily operational costs of 5 million baht. However, BTS has delayed the daily interest payments of 10 million baht to creditors.

Notes: The reason BTS is able to open the escalator service is that Siemens (BTS creditor and a rolling stock provider) and the escalators installation contractors are both German firm so it is possible to make a quick negotiation. Also, BTS decided to delay an IPO due to the bear market condition in SET. However, BTSC must make an IPO by November 15, 2000 or the company has to resubmit the IPO form to SEC.

Samak Insists He Will Not Nationalize BTS, Defends Skytrain Extensions

– *Dailynews*, Bangkok Metro Section, August 29, 2000

Samak insisted BMA won't buy BTSC to become a state enterprise under BMA, but he would definitely help the BTSC with a joint venture for BTSC extensions.

Mr. Samak Sunthoravet, BMA Governor, responded to the criticism ([see article below](#)) from the officers of BMA Traffic and Transportation Bureau who pointed out that Samak's plan to extend the Skytrain to Lumlookka, Mahachai, and Bang Plee would push the extension plan back to the beginning due to the new studies and other red tape, saying that such a person was

talking without using his head to think. The reason Samak make such a response was that the old OCMLT masterplans (both heavy-rail lines and the feeders) have already marked the lines to construct the Skytrains close to the extensions he proposed. He simply extended the routes a little more. For the investment plan, BTSC takes charge on the plan since the company has a concession while BMA finds potential investors.

Mr. Samak said even though Mr. Khiree Kanchanaphak has asked BMA to buy the Skytrain and proposed the nationalization of Skytrain to lower the fare, BMA would decline to do so since BMA does not have enough money. In the current economic downturn, BMA cannot absorb losses from BTSC but instead find a way to extend the routes which will help BTSC in the long run.

BTSC told the BTS customers that from August 26, 2000, free shuttle buses for Skytrain customers will run from 7AM to 10:30PM instead of 6AM to midnight. Furthermore, BTSC has readjusted three shuttle bus routes such as Mochit-SCB Park Plaza, Mochit-Central Ladphrao, Ekkamai (Sukhumvit 63)-Thong Lo (Sukhumvit 55).

Notes: Samak should listen to what his men are thinking about the projects and make compromises that will make everyone happy and complete the extension projects. However, Samak's notorious for being a grumpy old man so delicate negotiations and compromise are very critical things. One of the compromises I see as the best deal for both is that Samak should approve the old three extensions first so the construction of those extension can start. After that, Samak can extend the routes to Mahachai, Bang Plee, and Lum Lookka in the way he would like to do so. However, there must be some readjustments for the 3rd phase which I'll make my opinion as follows:

1) Mahachai Extension from Wongwian Yai Railway Station to Machai – No need for any new adjustment since everything looks fine.

2) Bang Plee Extension via Thepharak Road – this line should have a Sri Nakharin extension from Lum Salee Intersection to Thepharak-Sri Nakharin intersection to ensure that it belongs to BMA, not Samut Prakarn City Hall. Even better, Bang Plee extension should also extend to Nong Ngoo Hao Airport via King Kaeo Road.

3) Lum Lookka Extension via Lad Phrao Canal – It may not be a good deal to construct the extensions along the canal.

The alternatives could be as follows:

3.1) Reviving the canal taxi boats along Lad Phrao Canal (Saphan Mai-Klong Tan-Onnut) as a feeder for Lum Lookka Extension which will render the construction along the canals unnecessary. To make the feeder possible, the taxi boat vendors should issue tickets that can be used to ride a boat and Skytrain (single fare of course!) – tickets with 2 parts – one for boat and the other for Skytrain – for those who want to make a long journey. BMA will get the boat routes along the canals

back from Harbor Department by 2003, so Samak will be able to stretch the routes of feeder boats to serve the people in suburbs to travel into the City Center as he wants to do so.

3.2) Making the extension from Mochit to go along Vibhavadee Rangsit Highway to Ratchavibah Intersection

3.3) Turning right to go along Ratchadaphisek to Ratchada-Ladphrao Intersection to pick up passengers at SCB Park Plaza and Major Cineplex, Rajabhat Chandarakasem, Ministry of Justice and the courts and make a transfer station with MRTA Blue line at Lad Phrao Station

3.4) Turning left to go along Lad Phrao Road, making a transfer station to Lad Phrao pier to ride a feeder boat (Saphan Mai-Onnut), and Chokchai 4 Road to ride a shuttle van to Lad Pla Khao (Ram Indra Km.2). Keep going until it reaches Ram Indra-Atnarong Expressway

3.5) Turning left along Luang Pradit Manootham Road (the road under Ram Indra -Atnarong Expressway) to Rama Indra Road at Nuanchan Intersection (It is possible to go along Lad Phrao Road up to Bang Kapi Intersection, turn left to go along Nawamin Road to Charakhae Bua and turn left to Ram Indra Road. However it requires to demolish Bang Kapi flyover which would be a very unpopular measure.)

3.6) Going along Ram Indra Road to pick up the passengers at Bang Khen, Lad Plakhao, and Ram Indra Km4.

3.7) Turning right at Lak Si Circle to go along Phahol Yothin Road. There will be a transfer station to a feeder boat at the bridge near Wat Kau and RTAF to pick passengers at Saphan Mai.

- 3.8) Turning right to go along Lum Lookka Road to Lum Lookka.
- 3.9) Readjust the BMTA bus routes to fit the new mass transit systems.

New routes Require Approval from 13 Agencies

Heavy Criticism on Extension Projects: Back to the First Step?

– *Dailynews*, Bangkok Metro Section, August 28, 2000

According to the report from BMA City Hall, the officers of the BMA Traffic and Transportation Bureau have strong objections to Samak's plan to make three new extensions since such a plan will push the extension projects back to the beginning. Governor Samak's attempts to readjust the Skytrain extension routes will force the project to turn backwards since it requires new studies, new environmental reports, new approvals from 13 agencies, and new cabinet approval even though the cabinet have already approved the old extensions and is just waiting for a signature from the contractor. It is also impossible to realize all three new extensions within 4-year term of BMA governor since it requires new studies on the routes, feasibility, problems and obstacles. It is also requires BMA to write new environmental impact reports before getting approval from 13 agencies (e.g. MOTC, MOF, OCMLT, NESDB etc.) and eventually cabinet approval before calling for contractors.

The existing three extensions (Onnut-Samrong, Taksin-Wongwian Yai, and Mochit-Ratchayothin) had been studied since the term of Capt. Kritsada Arunwongse Na Ayudhaya, the former BMA governor from 1992-1996, and had passed all the necessary steps before being signed signing by the BMA governor and the viable contractors. This process took more than four years.

SRT Joining BMA to Extend Skytrain by Giving Some of Its Land

Samak Trying to Woo China to Invest in the Extension and Ring Road Line

– *Thaipost Daily*, August 23, 2000

Samak Sunthoravet, Bangkok governor, said he had met Mr. Sarawut Thammasiri, Director of State Railways of Thailand (SRT) to discuss land allocation to construct the BTS extension from Taksin Station to Mahachai via Wongwian Yai Station. The distance from Taksin Station to Wongwian Yai Station is about 2.5-2.6 km and the distance from Wongwian Yai Station to Mahachai is about 28 km. Therefore, the Mahachai extension (AKA the Southern Extension of the Skytrain) will be about 30-31 km long.

Mr. Sarawut told Samak that he felt glad to allow BMA to construct the Skytrain extension, and that SRT was going to join with BTSC to invest in this project. However, SRT was going to allow BMA to use only a 10-meter-wide strip of the 20-meter-wide strip SRT owns since SRT has to reserve some space to construct new rails linking Hua Lamphong Station to Wongwian Yai station in the future. The SRT and BMA will set up a committee to discuss the details of this extension project.

Also, the German ambassador in Thailand has sent a letter to Mr. Samak to discuss the 37-million-baht government loan for the feasibility study. Mr. Samak said he expected that the Mahachai extension would be the first extension to be started.

Furthermore, Mr. Samak discussed with Mr. Sarawut the Bangkok Satellite City Projects which will be started at the construction of the new commuter lines. The first line will start from Makasan Station (SRT Depot) to Chachoengsao. Actually, there is an Eastern SRT line stretching from Yommaraj to Laem Chabang (Deep Seaport) and Aranyaprathet (Border town to Cambodia). However, the eastern commuter line running from Hua Lamphong to Hua Takhae does not have enough capacity to carry Bangkokians to and from both ends. Therefore, the new commuter tracks are necessary to allow Bangkok to expand as it needs. In the future, there will be a new mass transit loop running along the Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road which has a distance of about 100 km. However, Samak needs to discuss this with the Highway Department before proposing this line.

Samak said at end of this September, he is going to have a meeting with other 31 Asian city governors so he will have a chance to talk with representatives from China about the investment in Skytrain extensions and the Kanchanaphisek Loop Line since China has very strong interest in these two megaprojects.

Notes: Samak may need to consider replacement housing for neighborhoods living along the

MaeKlong Line in the same way he did for the neighborhoods along Lad Phrao Canal (see article below). For the Kanchanaphisek Loop Line, it is a great deal but Samak will have to link the East-West section running from Bang Khunthian to Bangkhae, Talingchan, Bang Yai, Bang Buathong, Bang Pa In, Lum Lookka, Minburi, Saphan Soong, Onnuj, and Bang Plee. Southern section will be start after the Southern section of Kanchaphisek Outer Ring Road becomes a reality which will need several years to do so.

Soothing the Neighborhoods Around Lad Phrao Canal Samak Guarantees New Apartments for the Neighborhood Families

– *Thai Post Daily*, August 22, 2000

(Bangkok Governor) Samak guarantees new apartments for those who surrender the land along Lad Phrao Canal for the BTSC Northern Extension by negotiating with the National Housing Authority to allocate new apartments for them, so there is no need to panic.

Mr. Samak Suthoravet said he would ask the neighborhoods to surrender some land along the canal to BMA for the construction since it is necessary to raise the concrete pillars along the canal banks.

“BMA doesn’t want to make the people along the canals to panic since BMA’s ready to find new apartments not far from their old neighborhoods to accommodate them.” He’ll discuss with NHA (National Housing Authority – www.nha.or.th) to get some advice and agreements to construct new apartments to accommodate BMA officers and their families as well as the poor neighborhoods along the canal. He’ll ask NHA to allow big families (a family that has 2 or more children) to have 2 units (rooms) of an apartment for each big family.

However, Col. Winai Somphongse, Samak’s rival, said Bangkok’s traffic problems come not from the lack of mass transit system but the lack of traffic discipline. It would be much better off to use BMA Municipal Affair officers (Jao Nath Thee Thessakit) to become traffic volunteers by getting some traffic control training from the Traffic Police Bureau since BMA Municipal Affair officers no longer deal with hawkers every Wednesday as they used to do (note: after Samak was elected, he ending the Wednesday ban on food vendors on sidewalks).

Supporting BTS Extension to Mahachai OCMLT Agrees with Samak to Use the SRT Route Costs: 6-7 Billion Baht

– *Thairath Daily*, August 19, 2000

Bangkok Governor Samak Suthoravet discussed with Pol. Maj. Yongyut Sarasombut the Skytrain Extensions at the OCMLT building on the morning of August 18. After the 40-minute discussion, Mr. Samak said OCMLT agreed with his proposal, but still had some differences about the details.

1) Eastern Extension – Samak wants to extend to Bangplee via Sukhumvit Road and Thepharak Road while OCMLT wants to follow the cabinet-approved route to Samrong Tai via Sukhumvit Road.

2) Northern Extension – Samak wants to extend to Lum Lookka via Samsen Canal, Bangsue Canal, and Ladphrao Canal while OCMLT wants to go along Phaholyothin Road and Lumlookka Road. Otherwise, this extension could go along Vibhavadee Highway and then use the northern section of Hopewell project to Lak Hok and then turn right to Lum Lookka.

3) Southern Extension – Samak wants to extend to Mahachai via Taksin Road and Ekkachai Road while OCMLT suggests that it should go along MaeKlong Railway Line.

Samak said he will discuss with the German Embassy concerning the 37-million baht loan for the feasibility study to find the best routes for those extensions. After those talks, he will negotiate with private investors who want to deal with these extension projects.

Samak said since Bangkok expands so fast that many Bangkokians have moved to suburbs. Therefore, it would be a much better deal if the Skytrain had been expanded at that time as far as possible instead of constructing one by one as Dr. Bhichit has planned. After the long extensions are done, the fare should be a flat rate at 20-25 baht since the extension would be able to carry a million passengers a day. Samak said he won’t guarantee that all the extensions will be done within his 4-year term, but he’ll start all 3 extensions at the same time.

Pol. Maj. Yongyut said OCMLT will study these extensions in detail to fit them into the

revised mass transit master plan. When the final draft of the master plan is done, OCMLT will deliver it to the Traffic Committee and Cabinet to get approval.

JICA has advised OCMLT that the success of mass transit systems depends on complete networks, good extensions, and a fare structure fitting into passengers' budgets. These three elements of success depends on strong and steady financial resources. So far, the Northern and Eastern extensions will need about 30 billion baht and Southern extension will need 6-7 billion baht to realize them. The Southern extension (Taksin-Mahachai) has the strongest potential to be finished and to be put into service due to strong demand from Thonburi people, and it will take about 3 years to finish this extension. However, BMA needs to negotiate with SRT first so BMA can start the construction of Southern extension immediately.

The Best Transport ***Asiaweek* August 18-25, 2000**

“Bangkok’s new Skytrain, a mere 23-km system, is already credited with improving traffic by about 4%. Which is why cities around the region are investing in rail lines. Singapore is to extend its 83 km of mass-rail lines by another 20 km. In China, Beijing is adding 13.5 km to its existing system, compared to 23 km in Guangzhou and 27 km for Shanghai. Delhi is fast coming into line too. The Indian capital expects to have a 55-km network in place by 2005 along with an astounding 50% reduction in air pollution.” The complete article is [here](#).

Major New Extensions Proposed!!!

Samak Drawing Skytrain Extensions to Bang Plee – Mahachai – Lumlookka

– Daily News (www.dailynews.co.th), issue August 9, 2000, Bangkok Metro Section

(New Bangkok Governor) Mr. Samak plans ahead for BTS extensions to Samut Sakhon, Samut Prakarn and Pathumthanee to boost passengers to the one-million-passengers-a-day level. He has negotiated with BTSC creditors about his plan to finance the project and with OCMLT to push his proposal into the national agenda for upcoming government to get cabinet approval.

Mr. Samak Sunthoravet, BMA governor said he was going to discuss with OCMLT the proposal to make three new Skytrain extensions since the three cabinet-approved extensions are still too short to serve Bangkokians who live in suburb areas. Samak’s Skytrain extensions are as follows:

1) Lumlookka Extension: From Mochit Station to go along with Bangsue Canal, Ladphrao Canal, Bangbua Canal, Thanon Canal (Ladphrao, Bangbua and Thanon canals are the same canal but different names in the different places), Ying Charoen Flea Market (a major flea market in the Northern Bangkok in Phaholyothin Road in addition to See Mum Muang Farmer market and Thai Flea Market along Vibhavadee Highway and Chatuchak Weekend Market), and then going along Sai Mai Road (Phaholyothin 54 Road), Km 25th Lane, Lum Lookka Road, Eastern Outer Ring Road to Lum Lookka District office in Pathum Thane.

2) Bang Plee Extension: From Onnut Station going along Sukhumvit road to Samrong and then turning left to go along Thepharak Road which intersects Sri Nakharin Road. The line will end up at Bang Plee District Office, Samut Prakarn.

3) Mahachai Extension: From Taksin Bridge to Taksin Road and then turn Left to Dao Khanong and then turn right to go along Ekkachai Road and pass Mahachai Muang Mai to Mahachai area (the town center in Muang District, Samut Sakhon)

All three extensions will be around 60 km. There is no need for people to surrender land to BMA except in the places to construct stairways. For Lum Lookka extension, the construction will go along the bank of the canal, not at the deepest course of the canal to prevent the extension from becoming an obstacle when BMA tries to drain floodwaters during the flooding season and to minimize the environmental impact to the canal and the neighborhoods along the canals.

Samak said he was going to ask OCMLT if they would approve his proposals. If so, he’ll push his plan as hard as possible to put into the national agenda and get cabinet approvals. He’d start construction after receiving cabinet approval and the contract signing with the contractors, BMA and the BTSC. If not, he’ll shorten the extensions to BKK city limit (except in the case of

Samrong Tai extension which has already stretched beyond Bangkok city limit).

For the investment method, Mr. Samak said he has discussed with BTSC creditors such as KFW Bank of Switzerland and Siam Commercial Bank Pcl. about it. Those creditors said they have an interest in this plan since it will enable BTSC to gain more daily income, break even with the Skytrain project, and repay the debt BTSC owes. Samak also proposed that BMA should be one of major shareholders of BTSC via Krungthep Thanakhom Co. Ltd (Financial Arm of BMA). The initial ticket fee would be 20 baht flat rate and the fee will be raised to 25 and 30 baht in the next 4-5 years after the extensions become a reality to attract a million daily passengers.

Notes: As far as I am concerned, Samak's proposal is quite a good deal but I have to figure out many technical issues along his extension routes:

1) How can he stretch Lum Lookka extension without a complicated structure? If it goes to Lad Phrao intersection and then turns right to Vibhavadee and turns left to Bangsue Canal, it won't complicate the route structure but it will cause a sharp and dangerous curve at Lad Phrao Intersection. If it goes from Mochit Station directly to Bangsue Canal, it will require extra rails and complicated structure to enable the rolling stocks to run as smooth as possible and he will need an extra depot at Lum Lookka station as well. Lum Lukkka extension will pass through the RTAF area – his Thai Citizen Party area – so BTS may gain more passengers from RTAF servicemen and their families.

2) For Bangplee extension, it is a Samrong extension plus an extra route to Bang Plee via Thepharak Road. The Samrong Tai extension is close to the Erawan Shrine so Samak might not decide to stretch the route along Sukhumvit Road to Paknam.

3) Mahachai extensions will be parallel to Mae Klong Railway (Dao Khanong to Mahachai) and MRTA Orange line (Wongwian Yai to Dao Khanong). I'm not so sure if OCMLT will approve this line since it has a long stretch, and there will be other routes to serve Bangkokians in suburbs.

Kheeree Biting the Bullet by Cutting BTS Fare by 55 – 70 % to Attract More Regular Passengers

– *Thannsetthakij* Vol. 20, No. 1508, July 27 – 29, 2000

Mr. Kheeree Kanchanaphak, BTSC CEO, said the BTSC is going to introduce 30-day student and 30-day adult passes for those who ride Skytrain as part of their daily routine. The 30-day passes will expire 30 days after the day of purchase and have a limit of 30 trips. You can use the passes to go to any stations. It will be a big bargain if you travel a long distance (e.g. Taksin to Mochit).

The 30-day student passes are for those not older than 23. Each pass will cost 360 baht a pass (12 baht a trip within 30 days after purchase). Student passes are now on sale in Chulalongkorn Book Center (Siam Square and Chulalongkorn University Campus), and they will be on sale in the BTS stations on August 1, 2000.

For the 30-day adult passes, they will be on sale in BTS stations on August 15, 2000. Each pass will cost 540 baht (18 baht a trip within 30 days after purchase). For those who do not use Skytrain as a regular basis, BTSC will issue BTS gold cards on a 1: 1 basis. These offers will expire on the New Year Eve (December 31, 2000).

To make the Skytrain more convenient to passengers, BTSC will introduce free shuttle buses for those who are Skytrain passengers which will run from 6 AM to midnight. This service will start on August 1, 2000. BTSC rented the shuttle buses from Microbus Co. Ltd. There will be 7 shuttle bus lines:

- 1) Line 1180, Silom-Sathon -> from Saladaeng Station, Narathiwat Ratchanakharin Road, Chong Nonsee Station, Sathon Road, Rama IV Road back to Saladaeng Station
- 2) Line 1171, Wireless Road – Lungsuan -> from Wireless Road, Ploenchit Road – Chitlom Station, Lungsuan Road, Sarasin Road
- 3) Line 1172, Asok-Nana -> from Sukhumvit Road, Asok Station, Phetburi Road, Soi Nana (Sukhumvit 3) and back to Asok Station
- 4) Line 1174, Thong Lor – Phromphong -> from Soi Thong Lor (Sukhumvit 55), Phetburi Road, Soi Phromphong (Sukhumvit 39) – Thong Lo Station
- 5) Line 1170, Ratchaprarob – Chitlom -> from the Empress Hotel, Makkasan Road, Ratchaprarob (Patoonam), Bangkok Barzaar, Chitlom Station, Ploenchit Road

6) Line 1176, Klongtan – Ekkamai -> from Sukhumvit Road, Phra Khanong Station, Phra Khanong-Klongtan Road (Sukhumvit 71), New Phetburi Road – Ekkamai (Sukhumvit 63)

7) Line 1177, Sukhumvit 36 – Sukhumvit 26 -> from Rama IV Road, Soi Saeng Sabuy (Sukhumvit 36), Sukhumvit Road, Thong Lor Station, Soi Ari (Sukhumvit 26)

All of the shuttle bus lines will run on circle routes. There will be brochures for all seven shuttle bus lines.

Mr. Arnut Abhabhirom, the BTSC Board Consultant, said the company has installed 12 escalators in 10 stations such as Mochit (2 escalators), Ari, Victory Monument (2 escalators), Ratchathevee, Nana, Ekkamai, Thonglor, Phrakhanong, Saladaeng, and Taksin. They will be ready for service in August, 2000. The company hopes that these marketing activities ease travel difficulties, create ease for BTS passengers, and thus improve the quality of life for Bangkokians.

from *Ban on Elevated Trains Faces Appeal*, by Patcharee Luengthai, *The Nation*, Monday, July 3, 2000

The SRT would ask the cabinet to change the resolution issued on May 17, 1994 requiring mass transit systems within a 25 square-kilometer core area to be underground.

SRT has hired TEAM Consulting Engineering and Management Co Ltd, Electrowatt Engineering Ltd, LEK Consulting Ltd., JMP (Thailand) Ltd, and ASDECON Corporation Ltd to work as consultants for the feasibility study on the Bangkok Railroad Improvement Project which will be finished later this month.

Those consultants have proposed an “ultimate service network” for long-term development of the SRT’s network in Bangkok Metropolitan Region which they derived from the government’s 20-year Railroad Improvement Project which focuses on the railway infrastructure development of the SRT corridor. This 20-year project is derived from the 1994 Urban Rail Transportation Master Plan and the current goals of SRT.

According to the project, there will be 3 types of local and regional passenger services: mass rapid transit (MRT) services, standard commuter services, and express commuter services. MRT services will start from Donmuang Railway Station to Hua Mark Railway Station. SRT commuter services will start from Rangsit Railway Station to Hua Mark Railway Station, and extend to Nong Ngoo Hao Airport later on. The SRT long distance passenger/freight services will be from Ayutthaya to Chachoengsao via Hua Lamphong. Bang Sue Junction will become a depot for both MRT and SRT.

The consultants propose a gradual development from today’s system to an ultimate service network, targeting the total 1,853,000 passengers a day by the year 2021 -> MRT will carry 30% of this figure and the commuter will carry the rest.

SRT officers said that it would cost the SRT about 26 billion Baht (US\$ 520 million) to construct the elevated lines from the Northern to the Eastern Corridor (Rangsit – Yommarat – Hua Mark), but it would cost the SRT 50 billion Baht (US\$ 1,250 million) to construct the underground tracks for the same corridors. Investment costs for electricity and maintenance will be 36 billion Baht (US\$ 900 million) for MRT and 32 billion Baht (US\$ 800 million) for commuter service system.

Furthermore, the elevated tracks are much easier to construct since the contractors can simply use the pillars from the moribund Hopewell Project and thus solve the grade separation problems. Demolishing these abandoned superstructures to construct underground tracks is not practical at all.

The consultants said the option selected for the configuration of the northern corridors from Bangsue to Hua Lamphong (about 6.5 km), and the eastern corridors from Makkasan to Yommaraj (about 5.9 km) will dictate the option from the proposed future southern corridor extending from Hua Lamphong crossing the River to Wongwian Yai Railway Station (3.5 km). For the new western corridor from Bang Sue to Rama VI Bridge, it should be the elevated tracks. The consultants recommend that the government should bare the costs of track infrastructure, electrical and mechanical systems while the private firms should pay for the rolling stocks, operations and maintenance.

Notes: The SRT preferred network is as follows:

Mass Rapid Transit Services Stations – Northern Corridor

- 1) Donmuang Airport (Donmuang Railway Station – opposite to the International Terminal which will become an airport for cargo and chartered flight services after Nong Ngoo Hao Airport becomes the only Bangkok International Airport – a transit station to SRT commuter services and SRT long distance service)
- 2) Donmuang South (Domestic Terminal)
- 3) Karn Keha (Thung Songhong Housing – apartments run by National Housing Authority)
- 4) Laksi (Km 19 railway station and neighborhood)
- 5) Chulaporn (Laksi Railway Station – but the station is close to Chulabhorn Research Institute)
- 6) Thung Songhong (Thung Songhong Railway Station – near Chitchon Road to North Park)
- 7) Bang Khen (Bang Khen Railway Station)
- 8) Prachanivej (Prachaniwet 1 Village, near Wat Samian Naree)
- 9) Ratchadaphisek (near the flyover connecting Ratchadaphisek Inner Ring Road together)
- 10) Bangsue 2 (Km 11 railway station and neighborhood)
- 11) Bangsue 1 (Bangsue Junction – connecting MRTA Blue line, SRT commuter services and SRT long distance services – should be underground)
- 12) Pradiphat (Pradiphat station near RTA military zone – should be underground)
- 13) Ranong (Ranong station near RTA Military Education Department – should be underground)
- 14) Samsen (Samsen Railway station – should be underground but probably not possible since there are some abandoned pillars from Hopewell project here)
- 15) Dusit (near Chitladda Royal Railway Station – must be underground)
- 16) Yommaraj (near OCMLT office – transit to Eastern Corridor)

Mass Rapid Transit Services Stations – Eastern Corridors

- 1) Yommaraj (near OCMLT office – transit to Northern Corridor)
- 2) Phyathai (Transit to SRT Commuter service and BTS green line)
- 3) Ratchaprarob (near Pratoonam Market)
- 4) Makkasan (Makkasan Railway Station – SRT maintenance center)
- 5) Asoke (Transit to MRTA Blue line, SRT commuter services and SRT long distance service)
- 6) Watmai Chonglom (opposite to Soi Prasarnmit)
- 7) Soi Soonwichai (near Channel 11 TV station and RCA)
- 8) Klong Tan (Klong Tan Railway Station)
- 9) Ram Khamhaeng (Sukhumvit 71 Railway Station, near NASA Spacedrome (a disco), the beginning of Ram Khamhaeng Road)
- 10) Rama IX (near a short cut to new Rama IX Road)
- 11) Seri (Seri village)
- 12) Hua Mark (Hua Mark Railway Station – transit to SRT commuter service, end of MRT line)

SRT commuter services – Northern corridor

- 1) Rangsit (Rangsit Railway Station)
- 2) Donmuang Airport (Donmuang Railway Station – opposite to the International Terminal which will become an airport for cargo and chartered flight services after Nong Ngoo Hao Airport becomes the only Bangkok International Airport for services – a transit station to MRT services and SRT long distance service)
- 3) Bangsue 1 (Bangsue Junction – connecting MRTA Blue line, MRT and SRT long distance services – should be underground)
- 4) Hua Lamphong (Bangkok Railway Station – transit to MRTA Blue line, SRT Long Distance Service)

SRT commuter services – Eastern corridor

- 1) Hua Lamphong (Bangkok Railway Station – transit to MRTA Blue line, SRT Long Distance Service)
- 2) Phyathai (Transit to SRT Commuter service and BTS green line)
- 3) Asoke (Transit to MRTA Blue line, MRT and SRT long distance services)
- 4) Hua Mark (Hua Mark Railway Station – transit to MRT service, end of SRT commuter line)

SRT commuter services – proposed future Western Corridor

- 1) Bangsue 1 (Bangsue Junction – connecting MRTA Blue line, MRT and SRT long distance

services – should be underground)

- 2) Bangson (Bangson Railway Station near Rama VI Bridge)
- 3) Bang Bamru (near Mahasawat Canal and Southern bus terminal)
- 4) Talingchan (Talingchan junction – Transit to SRT long distance services)
- 5) Nakhon Pathom (Nakhon Pathom Railway Station)

SRT commuter services – proposed extensions

- 1) Ayutthaya (Northern Corridor)
- 2) Ban Thapchang (Thubchang Railway Station)
- 3) Wat Lanboon (Onnut Km 14, Lad Krabang)
- 4) Lad Krabang (Lad Krabang Railway Station – Transit to SRT Long Distance service – will branch out into 2 lines – one to Nong Ngoo Hao International Airport and the other to Chachoengsao)
- 5) Nong Nogghao (The airport will be opened around 2006)

International Airport

- 6) Chachoengsao (Chachoengsao Junction)

SRT long distance passenger/freight services – Northern corridor

- 1) Rangsit (Rangsit Railway Station)
- 2) Donmuang Airport (Donmuang Railway Station – opposite to the International Terminal which will become an airport for cargo and chartered flight services after Nong Ngoo Hao Airport becomes the only Bangkok International Airport for services – transit to MRTA Blue line, SRT Long Distance Service)

SRT long distance passenger/ freight services – Eastern corridor

- 1) Hua Lamphong (Bangkok Railway Station – transit to MRTA Blue line, SRT Long Distance Service)
- 2) Asoke (Transit to MRTA Blue line, MRT and SRT long distance services)
- 3) Hua Mark (Hua Mark Railway Station – transit to MRT service, end of SRT commuter line)
- 4) Chachoengsao (Chachoengsao Junction)

SRT long distance passenger/ freight services – proposed future Western Corridor

- 1) Bangsue 1 (Bangsue Junction – Connecting MRTA Blue line, MRT and SRT long distance services – should be underground)
- 2) Talingchan (Talingchan junction – Transit to SRT long distance services)
- 3) Nakhon Pathom (Nakhon Pathom Railway Station)

Note: I thought that the reason behind the SRT appeal to the cabinet not to enforce the underground rule is that this rule will bar BTSC from becoming a private firm that runs the MRT as well as SRT commuter services. The thinking being that BTSC could not deal with running a subway. Even the Skytrain has nearly bankrupts the company. They will need to wait for 10 years to break even.

Park and Ride – From Skytrain, Chaophraya River, and Chatuchak Weekend Market – *Anusarn Or Sor Thor* (Tourist Authority of Thailand Journal), May, 2000

BTS Skytrain has cooperated with Park Safe Thailand Co. Ltd. to create a park and ride facility in front of Sukhumvit 81 – near Gate C of Onnut Station which will take about 5 minutes to walk to from the station.

Asia Park has a capacity to hold 400 cars in that area with a daily service at the rate 10 baht/hour, 30 baht/day if parking more than 3 hours. Furthermore, there is a monthly option for using park and ride if you use this facility very often – 600 baht/month if you park ONLY during the weekdays and 850 baht/month if you use this parking lot in daily basis.

This Park and ride facility will have security guards and computerized parking systems. Those who want to use this service should call (02) 934-7427-9 and (02) 333-0933 for more information.

Solving Skytrain Problems

– From Footnote Thailand, *Thairath*, May 13, 2000

So far, the Skytrain has not been fully utilized since BMTA bus and SRT train services haven't been adjusted to feed passengers to the Skytrain and vice versa.

During the ceremony to start the construction of Rama VIII Bridge on May 8, HM The King mentioned the deserted Hopewell project that SRT should utilize the abandoned concrete piles to elevate the rail tracks. Furthermore, HM The King advised the SRT to follow the Swiss Railway Authority model to improve the transportation around Bangkok Metropolitan Area.

This revival plan for the Hopewell Project will not only solve troublesome problems about the rail crossing (roads vs. railways), but it will also become a major transport route to downtown Bangkok for those who live around Rangsit and the Hua Mark area. Later on, this Hopewell line will extend to Nong Ngoo Hao Airport (His Majesty will come to perform a cornerstone laying ceremony at this airport around December 2000).

The last but not least significant benefits for the revival of this project is that Hopewell line will cross the Skytrain and subway lines at Phyathai, Asok, Bangsue and later on at Wongwian Yai, Phan Fah, Dusit, and Hua Lamphong which will enable suburban people to travel into the city center without driving.

For BTS Skytrain problems, bus stops must be closer to Skytrain platform stairs or even better, the bus lines must be adjusted to feed the Skytrain or better still the bus and Skytrain tickets should be interchangeable.

Park and Ride – From Turning Right for Traffic Correction

– *Thairath*, May 15, 2000

Lom Hua Pingpong

The first Park and Ride facility for the Skytrain has been officially opened close to Queen Sirikit Park, Kampaengphet 3 Road, near Chatuchak Park. BMA expects this park and ride facility to ease the traffic problem around Chatuchak Weekend Market, Chatuchak Park, and Mochit station since this facility will be able to hold about 1700 cars (around June 2000). During this promotion period, BMA will run free trams to send the passenger to the market, the parks, and the Skytrain station. Therefore, those who drive around those area should try parking their cars in the facility and riding Skytrain to downtown Bangkok.

Mr. Hua Pingpong hopes that the number of Skytrain passengers will be boosted after waiting for five months for this park and ride facility to become a reality.

For those who live around Onnut-Samrong area, there is another park and ride facility run by a private firm (Asia Park). Drivers will have to pay 30 baht a day to park a car in this facility.

MRTA better start the construction of the Park and Ride facility at Ladphrao 21 as soon as possible – after Dusit Thane Hotel refused to let MRTA to use its area to construct park and Ride facility. MRTA should not wait until after opening like BTS to start the construction of Park and Ride.

Park and Ride Opened at Queen Sirikit Park near Mochit Station

– *Thairath*, May 13, 2000

Mr. Wirat, Director of Chatuchak Weekend Market said the park and ride will open on May 14 near Queen Sirikit Park, Kamphaengphet 3 Road. The first section of this park and ride will carry 300 cars and the second section will be able to carry about 1000 cars a day. However, the second section will be opened around early June. Drivers can park their cars without paying any fees for a whole day and night.

During a promotion period, BMA will run two shuttle trams as a loop for free to pick and send passengers to Chatuchak Weekend Market, Mochit Station, Rotfai Park. The trams will run from 9 AM to 6 PM and they will carry 40 passengers for each tram. This park and ride facility will help those who come to Chatuchak Park, Chatuchak Weekend Market and Skytrain to find a place to park and their cars.

BMTA Urging BTSC to Run Feeder Buses

– *Dailynews*, May 8, 2000

BMTA is urging BTSC to run air-conditioned buses to feed the Skytrain by this June or BMTA will revoke the concession granted to Bangkok Transit Feeders Co. Ltd. (BTSC's subsidiary) and give the concession to another private company. So far, BTSC hasn't started the bus services yet despite the strict schedule in the concession (starting feeder buses by December 1999 and getting all 13 feeder lines operational by June 2000).

BMTA said there will be no problems even though no private firms have offered to take over the concession since BMTA will put enough buses to feed Skytrain, and too much competition will put BMTA at loss. The best way to deal with this problem is to readjust the bus routes to run the buses across like a chessboard – not to compete with each other to ensure maximum efficiency and maximum profits.

Split Opinion on Skytrain Extension Bids

– April 7, 2000

After the meeting of the committee for BTS Extension Projects, City Clerk Prasert Samalapha said the committee is split—with some supporting BTSC (the present Skytrain operator) and the others supporting open bids from other private firms to construct the extension lines. Those who support BTSC contend it will be easier to connect the rails, use the stations, and collect fares if present Skytrain operator BTSC gets permission to extend the lines. However, those who support an open bid from other firms feel it is necessary to get the opinions from other firms since the extension projects have to deal with lots of money. BTSC may not be ready to finance and undertake these projects since BTSC has reportedly lost heavily on the first section of the Skytrain project.

Due to the differing opinions, Prasert Samalapha said the committee has asked the engineering consultant for these projects clarify this issues and be ready for another meeting in two weeks. Nevertheless, the contract between BMA and the BTSC said that if BMA calls for an open bid, the company who wins the bid must get an approval from BTSC as well. (from *Thai Post Daily*, April 6, 2000)

More Skytrain Elevators

Thai Post Daily reports that the BTSC and BMA are going to install 12 escalators from the ground level to ticket booth level at 10 stations (Morchit, Victory Monument, Phayathai, Ratchathwee, Asok, Onnut, Saladaeng, Chong Nonsee, Surasak, and Taksin). I can testify for that since I have seen the BTSC workers moving the old stairs out and a sign saying that the installation of the escalators will be done in June 2000.

Passengers Falling

BTSC have better make 25%/35% discount permanent discounts since the number of passenger keeps falling: 171,310 passengers a day in December, 145,170 passengers a day in January, and 135,710 passengers a day in February. BMA people are trying to help BTSC boost the number of passengers by facilitating the legal and business affairs to speed up the extensions process, managing buses to feed the Skytrain lines, and employing more PR to meet the goal of 4-600,000 passengers a day or at least half of that amount.

Fountain Systems

Furthermore, BMA asked BTSC to install a fountain system to trap dust particles and reduce air pollution. One is now testing at Ratchathewee Station and with plans to install more at other major stations.

Speed Pill Dealers Annoy Passengers

The Police Department is furious and has ordered agents to track down speed pill dealers after hearing the reports from BTSC that dealers had harassed student passengers at Siam, Ratchadamri, Saladaeng, Chong Nonsee, Surasak, and Taksin Stations. BTSC, BMA, and the Police Department may have to install Closed Circuit TV systems and hotlines to police stations. The Ministry of Education may also send Student Police to catch those delinquents in the trains and stations.

(from *Thai Post*)

Proposed High-speed Mae Klong Rail Line Map (Thai only)

March 11, 2000 Click [here](#) for a Thai-language map (70 K) of the proposed high-speed Mae

Klong rail line. It has been made as small as possible for download, so it is a bit grainy, but everything is readable and it is still a beautiful map. We hope we live long enough to see it made a reality! Click [here](#) for more info on this project (as reported on this site in February, 2000).

Skytrain Bus Line Map (Thai only)

March 11, 2000

Click [here](#) for a Thai-language map (44.6 K) of the Skytrain bus lines.

Transport Master Plan

– March 9, 2000

OCMLT told both AEI (the company that wants to construct the high speed train from Pak Tho to Donmuang) and MRTA (they want to revitalize the Hopewell project – BTSC's subsidiary) to wait until the revised master plan for mass transit projects is finished in eight months. During that time, OCMLT asks all the companies involved in ongoing and proposed mass transit projects to cooperate with one another so they can share the rails and depots as well as other facilities to reduce construction costs. The economic downturn and the collapse of Hopewell project has caused OCMLT to come up with a revised master plan to replace the one approved by the cabinet on September 27, 1994. [Bangkok Master Plan](#)

The other 11 minor mass transit lines will be light rail lines, except the ones running in downtown Bangkok which will be “monorail” lines instead. The 11 minor lines will carry 5,000-20,000 passengers/hour/direction while the 5 major lines will carry 40,000 passengers/hour/direction.

Feeder line info:

1) Sri Nakharin Line – From Sri Nakharin Road (Lam Salee and Sri Nakharin intersection – North) to Onnut Road (Sukhumvit 77), Phra Khanong – Klongtan Road (Sukhumvit 71) to Ramkhamhaeng University (the Largest Open University in the World) – near Wat Thepleela Lane (Ramkhamhaeng 39). This line will pass through Unilever Thai holding Co. Ltd., Wat Mahabut (Maenak Phrakhanong shrine), NASA Spacedrome Disco.

This line will connect with MRTA Orange Line at Ramkhamhaeng Station, BTSC green line at Sri Nakharin and Onnut Station, and SRT red line at Ramkhamhaeng (AKA Sukhumvit 71) and Hua Mark Station. This line will belong to BMA – 22.4 km – 22 stations.

2) Samut Prakarn Line – From Sri Nakharin Road (Sri Nakharin Intersection – South), Sukhumvit and Thepharak Road. This line will pass through suburb villages, industrial zones around Paknam (Samut Prakarn) area as well as Naval Academy and Naval Museum and end up at downtown Paknam.

This line will connect with MRTA Orange line at Samrong Tai Station and BTSC green line at Sri Nakharin and Samrong Tai Intersection. This line will belong to Samut Prakarn Provincial Hall – 16.2 km – 9 stations.

3) Rat Boorana Line from Prachauthit Road and the road under the 1st stage Expressway. This line will go to King Mongkut University of Technology Thonburi (AKA Techno Bang Mod) and Suan Thonburirom Park. It will end up meeting the Rama III line at Rama IX Bridge Station.

The Expressway Authority of Thailand (ERT) will be the owner of this 9.2-Km line with 9 stations along the line. This line will connect with MRTA Orange line at Rat Boorana Station.

4) Chaeng Watthana Line from Pakkret to Minburi via Chaeng Watthana to Minburi Flea Market. This line will pass the AMD chip factory, Krisdanakhon and Maungthong Thane village, the 2nd Infantry Battalion – Royal Guard, Supreme Commander Headquarters, 1st Anti-Aircraft Regiment, CAT and TOT headquarters, Rajabhat Institute of Phranakhon, RTA Golf Field, Lad Pla Khao, Khannayao, Fashion Island, Siam Park, Bangchan Industrial Estate, and Minburi Intersection.

This line will belong to BMA and connect with MRTA purple line at Chaeng Watthana station and SRT red line at Laksi station – 26.9 km 27 stations.

5) Rama III Loop connecting the BTSC Green Line from Chong Nonsee Station to Taksin Bridge Station. This line will pass through Wat Phomaen (one of famous Chinese temples in Bangkok), Wat Dokmai, Rama IX Bridge, Bangkok Bridge, Wat Don Cemetery (now becoming a public park), Bangkok Dock (the oldest dockyard still in the business – founded in 1864), and Wat Suthawararam.

This line will be 17.2 km long and have 18 stations. So far, only Chong Nongsee – Sadhupradit Pier line (8.5 km – 9 stations) is approved by the cabinet. We'll wait and see if the BTSC will sign the contract with the BMA (the owner of the line) around May 2000 before the expiration of Dr. Bhijit's term as Bangkok governor. The trend shows that BTSC will sign the contract with the BMA so the company can gain more passengers from other areas.

6) Klong Lad Phrao Line – going from Klong Tan (the end of Lad Phrao canal) to Lam Lookka intersection of the Eastern Outer Ring Road. This line will pass through the neighborhoods and suburb villages along both banks of this canal as well as some significant place such as Wat Lad Phrao, Wat Bangbua, Saphan Mai Flea Market (AKA Yingcharoen Flea Market), Royal Thai Air Force area, Wat Ko, and Lamlookka area.

This line will be 26.1 km – 26 stations, belong to BMA and connect with MRTA Orange line at MRTA Depot.

7) Charansanitwongse Line – going along Ratchadapesiek Inner Ring Road (including the whole Charansanitwongse Road) from Mahaisawan Intersection to Northern Bangkok Power Plant in Bang Kruay.

This line will be 14.5 km long with 15 stations belonging to BMA and connect with MRTA Blue line at Tha Phra Station, MRTA Orange Line at Mahaisawan Station and SRT red line at Charansanitwongse Station.

8) City Center Loop – a monorail line running from Hua Lamphong, Debsirin Boy High School, Rama I Road, Phayathai Road, and Si Phraya Road and ending up at Si Phraya Pier – the busiest pier in Bangkok.

There will be 9 stations along the 6.4-km monorail line belonging to BMA which will be as follows:

- 8.1) Hua Lamphong – Bangkok Railway Station – connecting to the MRTA blue line
- 8.2) Debsirin – Debsirin Boy High School
- 8.3) Rama I – near Krasatsuek Bridge – connecting with SRT red line
- 8.4) Banthat Thong – Banthat Thong Intersection
- 8.5) National Stadium – connecting to the BTSC green line
- 8.6) Chulalongkorn – Chulalongkorn University – the oldest University in Thailand founded in 1916
- 8.7) Sam Yan – Sam Yan Intersection – connecting to the MRTA Blue line
- 8.8) Bang Rak – Bangrak District Office
- 8.9) Si Phraya – Si Phraya Pier

So far, the BMA has not proposed this project yet since the BMA does not have enough cash and financial resources to deal with it. Nevertheless, some of BMA governor candidates may want to realize this project by putting into his/her agenda – especially the would-be candidate like Mr. Samak Sunthorawet. However, it would be much better to wait until the revival of the SRT red line becomes reality (should be around 2010).

9) Bang Yai Line – going along Rattanahebet via Phrananklao Bridge to Bang Yai Intersection and then going along Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road to Talingchan on the left and Bang Buathong on the right.

This line will belong to Nonthaburi Provincial Hall. This 26.4-km line will connect with MRTA Blue line at Phra Nangklao Station and SRT red line at Talingchan Station. It will have 26

stations along the line.

10) Bangchan Line – going from Ratchadaphisek Inner Ring Road at Ratchayothin Intersection to Land Phrao Road and Nawamin Road (Sukhaphiban 1) to Km 8 of Ram Indra Road. There is also a branch from Sukhaphiban 1 to Kaset area along with the constructed Kaset-Sukhaphiban 1 Road.

This 33.1 km line will have 33 stations and connect with BTSC green line at Ratchayothin Station and MRTA blue line at Land Phrao Station. Since many Bangkokians ask the BTSC to extend to Bang Kapi area, this will be a good line to start up since this line will belong to BMA. However, it will become a very enormous task for the company to do so since the company needs to construct the Northern Extension via Ratchayothin Intersection first (via Ladphrao flyover) and then the construction of Bangchan line via Ram Indra-Atnarong Expressway and Bang Kapi Flyover later on. Magic Land owners will close its theme park at Lad Phrao area and move all the theme park machines to the new location at Dream World in Rangsit area (along the Rangsit – Nakhon Nayok road) in early June 2000 – so think about it!

11) Ram Indra Line – going along the road under Ram Indra-Atnarong Expressway (Pridee Banomyong and Luang Pradit Manootham Road) to the intersection between Rama IX and Ram Khamhaeng Road.

This 10.4 km line will have 10 stations and connect with MRTA Orange line at Ratchataphak Collage Station.

Finance – NESDB suggest BTSC to divide build Skytrain extensions into 2 phases
from *Thaipost*, February 29, 2000

Mr. Khiree successfully got support from the Chinese government for the joint-venture construction of BTS extensions. If the construction finishes, the Chinese government will extend the grace period for 5 years and 1.5% annual loan interest later on. Chinese government also has strong interest to deal with Hopewell revival with a US\$ 2-3 billion loan, and the government is ready to cooperate with Mr. Gordon Woo in this matter. However, the Chinese government said they feel afraid that the Chuan government is pro-American– the Chuan cabinet might reject the extension projects as well as the Hopewell revival and thus collapse the BTSC deal.

Finance – NESDB suggests that BTSC build the Silom-Sukhumvit extensions first and then Rama III extensions later on – depending on the readiness of private sector and the amount of potential passengers so the projects will not become burdens on the government's back later. Minister of Finance also asks the OCLMT to set up a Mass Transit Policy Committee to make Mass Transit policies follow the same path in the whole country before realizing the mass transit projects as well as the policies on mass transit service quality and prices of both mass transit projects which are under two different administrations. Ministry of Finance also tells OCLMT to study actual potential passengers from the extension projects to prevent the concession holders from losing money.

If the extension projects are approved, BMA and BTSC will negotiate the conditions of the contract. If the deal between BTSC and BMA collapses, BMA will ask for other contractors to do the jobs. BTSC is going to issue 400 million shares totaling 4 billion baht (about US\$ 100 million) for an IPO.

BMA issues the resolution that the senior citizens and the pregnant women can use elevators for the handicapped

– from *Thaipost* issue February 29, 2000

Mr. Theerachai Manomaiphiboon, deputy governor of Bangkok, told *Thaipost* that BTSC committee issued the resolution that the senior citizens and pregnant women can use 11 elevators for the handicapped installed at Mochit, Siam, Chong Nonsee, Onnuj, and Asok stations. BMA also said that there is someone who is going to offer 54 more elevators in addition to the escalators the BTSC is going to invest in. Both additional escalators and elevators will cost BMA 100 million baht (US\$ 2.5 million). BTSC will also transfer the green area along the line to BMA for maintenance, but BMA needs to install fences to prevent people from

trampling the grass, flowers and small trees.

BMA also asks BTSC to extend the 25-35% discount campaign to the end of April. BMA is also negotiating with Department of Treasury to construct a Park and Ride facility on the abandoned land in front of Mochit Station.

Deciding the Gauge & Extensions Schedule

– from *Thaipost*, March 1, 2000

The cabinet approved the Skytrain extensions, but it is necessary to take NESDB's comments (two construction phases and 10-40 baht ticket fee) into account to minimize the construction and operating cost. The Environment Protection Committee suggests that the extensions should use a meter gauge instead of the standard 1.435-meter gauge for better ventilation. However, BTS is unlikely to follow the suit since it will cause inconvenience in transferring the passengers from one line to another and dual gauges will add more operation cost than using a single gauge system. The proposal for the installation of escalators for the handicapped at all the stations along the new lines may also be rejected. BTSC considers installing only in stations that have a high number of passengers (e.g. Taksin, Bang Na, and Samrong Tai stations).

BTSC and BMA will have a discussion about these matters next week. If the negotiation fails, BMA will find someone else to carry out these projects. The Taksin and Samrong extensions will be done within three years (should be finished around December 2002 – to celebrate 75th Birthday of His Majesty and to serve people living on Thonburi side and industrial workers in Paknam-Samrong area respectively) and Rama III extensions will be done within five years (should be finished around August 2004 to celebrate 72th Birthday of Her Majesty and to serve people in the new economic zone of Rama III). BMA will join with NESDB, the Attorney General Bureau, OCLMT, the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Interior to draft the contracts for these extension projects which will be done within 3 months. BTSC said the extensions will raise the commuters to reach 600,000 passengers a day from the current 200,000 passengers a day and the company invited Bank of China and Metro China to co-invest in these projects.

Elevator Donation & Hopewell Plans

– from *Matichon Daily*, March, 2000

The South Korean Government donated 54 elevators to BMA to install at all Skytrain stations. Probably they will donate 54 Hyundai or LG elevators. However, both BMA and BTSC have to pay 100 million baht for the installation.

The government is considering about the plan to link BTSC with the suspended Hopewell projects since both projects use the standard 1.435-meter gauge. If it is feasible to do so, it will enable the Skytrain to gain many more passengers from the Rangsit and Hua Mark area and be a great boon for the company. Mr. Pradit Phattharaprasit (Deputy minister of Transportation and Communication) is responsible for this Hopewell revival plan. The minister has met with the BTSC, Siemens, Bank of China and Shanghai Metro to discuss the Hopewell revival plan. According to the plan, the government will have to carry the construction cost of 60 billion baht (about US\$ 1.5 billion) but the Bank of China will lend a cheap loan (1.5% interest) with a grace period (interest free) for 5 year. The company will ask for 50-year concession for the Hopewell project and it will take 3-4 years to finish.

The company will invest about 230 billion baht (about US\$ 5.75 billion) in this revival project. For the Hopewell tollway fee, the passenger will pay a 30 baht flat rate. For the elevated train from Rangsit to Huamark, the passengers will pay 10 baht for the initial fee and an additional 1 baht/km fee – up to 40 baht for a line. The line will go along the proposed routes (Rangsit-Yommarat, Yommarat-Hua Mark, Yommarat-Hua Lamphong and Maenam line -> to Port Authority of Thailand).

11 Minor Mass Transit Lines

– from *Manager Weekly* (<http://www.manager.co.th>), March 6-12, 2000

Most of these lines will be elevated light rails except the City Center Loop which will be a monorail line due to the narrow space. These 11 feeder lines will carry the passenger at the range of 5,000-20,000 passengers/hr/direction (5 major mass transit lines will carry 40,000 passengers/hr/direction). The total length of line will be 208.7 km with the station in every 800-2,000 meters (800 meters in downtown area, 1 km in Bangkok metro areas and 2 km at Bangkok Suburb areas – Nonthaburi, Pathumthanee and Samutprakarn). The total number of stations will be 204 stations, with 28 junctions to the 5 major mass transit lines. The total cost for the construction will be 257,544 million baht (around US\$ 6.5 billion).

1) Sri Nakharin Line – from Sri Nakharin Road (Lam Salee and Sri Nakharin intersection – North) to Onnut Road (Sukhumvit 77), Phra Khanong – Klongtan Road (Sukhumvit 71) to Ramkhamhaeng University (the Largest Open University in the World) – near Wat Thepleela Lane (Ramkhamhaeng 39). This line will connect with MRTA Orange Line at Ramkhamhaeng Station, BTSC green line at Sri Nakharin and Onnut Station, and SRT red line at Ramkhamhaeng (AKA Sukhumvit 71) Station. This line will belong to BMA – 22.4 km – 22 stations.

2) Samut Prakarn Line – From Sri Nakharin Road (Sri Nakharin Intersection – South), Sukhumvit and Thepharak Road. Connecting with MRTA Orange line at Samrong Tai Station and BTSC green line at Sri Nakharin and Samrong Tai Intersection. This line will belong to Samut Prakarn Provincial Hall – 16.2 km – 8 stations. This line will pass through suburb villages, industrial areas around Paknam (Samut Prakarn) area as well as Naval Academy.

3) Rat Boorana Line from Prachauthit Road and the road under the 1st stage Expressway. This line will connect with MRTA Orange line at Rat Boorana Station – 9.2 Km – 9 stations. This line will go to King Mongkut University of Technology Thonburi (AKA Techno Bang Mod). Expressway Authority of Thailand (ERT) will be an owner of this line.

4) Chaeng Watthana Line from Pakkret to Minburi via Chaeng Watthana to Minburi Flee Market. This line will connect with MRTA purple line at Chaeng Watthana station and SRT red line at Laksi station – 26.9 km about 20 stations. This line will pass AMD factory, Maungthong Thanee, the 2nd Infantry Battalion – Royal Guard, Supreme Commander Headquarters, CAT and TOT headquarters, Rajabhat Institute of Phranakhon, RTA Golf Field, Lad Pla Khao, Khannayao, Fashion Island, Siam Park, Bangchan Industrial Estate, and Minburi Intersection. This line will belong to BMA.

5) Rama III Loop connecting the BTSC Green Line from Chong Nonsee Station to Taksin Bridge Station – 17.2 km – 17 stations. So far, only Chong Nongsee – Sadhupradit Pier line (8.5 km – 9 stations) is approved by the cabinet. We will wait and see if the BTSC will sign the contract with BMA (the owner of the line) around May 2000 before the expiration of Dr. Bhijit's term as Bangkok governor. The trend suggests that BTSC will sign the deal with BMA so the company can gain more passengers from other areas.

6) Klong Lad Phrao Line – going from Klong Tan (the end of Lad Phrao canal) to Lam Lookka intersection of the Eastern Outer Ring Road. Connecting with MRTA Orange line at MRTA Depot. This line will be 26.1 km – around 20 stations, belonging to BMA. This line will pass through the neighborhoods and suburb villages along both banks of this canal as well as some significant place such as Wat Lad Phrao, Wat Bangbua Wat Ko, Saphan Mai Flee Market.

7) Charansanitwongse Line – going along Ratchadaphisek Inner Ring Road (including the whole Charansanitwongse Road) from Mahaisawan Intersection to Northern Bangkok Power Plant in Bang Kruay 14.5 km – 15 stations. This line will connect with MRTA Blue line at Tha Phra Station, MRTA Orange Line at Mahaisawan Station and SRT red line at Charansanitwongse Station.

8) City Center Loop – a monorail line running from Hua Lamphong, Debsirin Boy High School, Rama I Road, Phayathai Road, and Si Phraya Road and ending up at Si Phraya Pier – the busiest pier in Bangkok. There will be 9 stations along the 6.4-km monorail line:

- 8.1) Hua Lamphong – Bangkok Railway Station – Connecting with MRTA blue line here
- 8.2) Debsirin – Debsirin Boy High School
- 8.3) Rama I – near Krasatsuek Bridge – Connecting with SRT red line here
- 8.4) Banthat Thong – Banthat Thong Intersection
- 8.5) National Stadium – Connecting with the BTSC green line here
- 8.6) Chulalongkorn – Chulalongkorn University – the oldest University in Thailand
- 8.7) Sam Yan – Sam Yan Intersection – Connecting with MRTA Blue line here
- 8.8) Bang Rak – Bangrak District Office
- 8.9) Si Phraya – Si Phraya Pier

So far, the BMA has not proposed this project yet since the BMA does not have enough cash and financial resources to deal with it. Nevertheless, some of BMA governor candidates may want to realize this project by putting into his/her agenda – especially the would-be candidate like Mr. Samak Sunthorawet. However, it would be much better to wait until the revival of the SRT red line becomes reality (should be around 2010).

9) Bang Yai Line – going along Rattanahebet via Phrananklao Bridge to Bang Yai Intersection and then going along Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road to Talingchan on the left and Bang Buathong on the right. This line will belong to Nonthaburi Provincial Hall. This 26.4-km line will connect with MRTA Blue line at Phra Nangklao Station and SRT red line at Talingchan Station. It will have about 15 stations along the line.

10) Bangchan Line – going from Ratchadaphisek Inner Ring Road at Ratchayothin Intersection to Land Phrao Road and Nawamin Road (Sukhaphiban 1) to km 8 of Ram Indra Road. This 33.1 km line will have 33 stations and connect with BTSC green line at Ratchayothin Station and MRTA blue line at Land Phrao Station.

Since many Bangkokians ask the BTSC to extend to Bang Kapi area, this will be a good line to start up since this line will belong to BMA. However, it will become very enormous task for the company to do so since the company needs to construct the Northern Extension via Ratchayothin Intersection first (via Ladphrao flyover) and then the construction of Bangchan line via Ram Indra-Atnarong Expressway and Bang Kapi Flyover later on. Magic Land owners will close its theme park at Lad Phrao area and move all the theme park machines to the new location at Dream World in Rangsit area (along the Rangsit – Nakhon Nayok road) in early June 2000 – so think about it!

11) Ram Indra Line – going along the road under Ram Indra-Atnarong Expressway (Pridee Banomyong and Luang Pradit Manootham Road) to the intersection between Rama IX and Ram Khamhaeng Road. This 10.4 km line will have 10 stations and connect with MRTA Orange line at Ratchataphak Collage Station.

The list of stations for New Maeklong line connecting Paktho with Hua Lamphong will be as follows:

- 01) Hua Lamphong 2 – underground station at Nopphawongse Police Station – a station that connect both high speed rail and suburb commuter lines together
- 02) Klong Sarn – underground station under development to allow high speed rail to pass and commuter line to stop. It will be at the place where Klongsan station used to be (Now, it become a depot of BMTA bus No.3)
- 03) Wongwian Yai – underground station under development to allow high speed rail to pass and commuter line to stop.
- 04) Phonimit – Local station for commuter train
- 05) Klong Tonsai – Local station for commuter train – near Talard Plooi
- 06) Jomthong – Local station for commuter train
- 07) Wat Sai – Local station for commuter train
- 08) Wat Singha – Local station for commuter train
- 09) Bang Bon – Local station for commuter train near Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road

- 10) Karn Kheha (Bang Khunthian) – Local station for commuter train
- 11) Rang Sakae – Local station for commuter train
- 12) Rang Pho – Local station for commuter train
- 13) Sam Yaek – Local station for commuter train near Ekkachai Road
- 14) Ban Phromdaen – Local station for commuter train, near the boundary pole between Bangkok and Samut Nakhon
- 15) Thung Seethong – Local station for commuter train
- 16) SRT Worker Housing – Local station for commuter train
- 17) Bang Namjuead – Local station for commuter train
- 18) Kauk Kwai – elevated station that connect both high speed rail and suburb commuter line together.
- 19) Ban Khauk – a junction that go to Mahachai station and Tha Chalom Station
- 20) Klong Jak – Local station for commuter train to Mahachai Station
- 21) Mahachai – elevated station under development to allow commuter line to stop in downtown Samut Sakhon.
- 22) Ban Laem – Local station for commuter train, famous for Luangpho Banlaem Buddha Image
- 23) Tha Chalom – Local station for commuter train, famous for a fishing pier for fishermen
- 24) Ban Cheephakhao – Local station for commuter train
- 25) Bang Si khot – elevated station that connect both high speed rail and suburb commuter line together.
- 26) Bang Krajae – Local station for commuter train
- 27) Ban Bo – Local station for commuter train
- 28) Bang Thorat – Local station for commuter train
- 29) Bang Kalong – Local station for commuter train
- 30) Na Kwang – Local station for commuter train
- 31) Na Khok – Local station for commuter train
- 32) Khet Muang – Local station for commuter train, city limit of Samut Songkhram
- 33) Lad Yai – elevated station that connect both high speed rail and suburb commuter line together.
- 34) Bang Kraboon – Local station for commuter train and a junction to go to Pak Tho
- 35) Mae Klong – elevated station under development to allow commuter line to stop in downtown Samut Songkhram.
- 36) Proposed Local Train Station
- 37) Proposed Local Train Station
- 38) Proposed Local Train Station
- 39) Proposed Local Train Station
- 40) Pak Tho – elevated station that connect both high speed rail and suburb commuter line together.

Japanese Firm to make a Master Plan

From *Bangkok Post* – February 18, 2000

OCLMT will sign a 50-million baht contract with Pacific Consultants International—a Japanese consortium—next Thursday for the updated Bangkok mass transit master plan which will be done within 8 months. The updated plan will have the BTS lines, MRTA lines, the moribund Hopewell lines, suburban trains, and feeder lines to create an effective mass transit network. The contract payment comes from Japan Bank of International Cooperation (AKA OECF funds).

The consultant consortium also includes Wilbur Smith Associates from the US, Railway Technical Service from Japan, and Asian Engineering Consultants Corp, Tesco Ltd and TransConsult Co from Thailand. The OCLMT wants to see mass transit systems share their facilities, including tracks, to reduce overall operational costs. This updated master plan will not duplicate the SRT (State Railway of Thailand) plan to revive the Hopewell project since OCLMT takes charge of the overall plan while SRT (with Team Consultant) takes charge of the details. The SRT hired Team Consultant on October 28, 1999, for about 81 million baht to study the revival of the Hopewell project. The study is due for completion by July 26.

Charnchai Anantasate, director of the SRT's special program development department, said the company was looking into the old details of the Hopewell project before judging the feasibility of a new version of the scheme. SRT contracted the firm to study the feasibility of a

new Hopewell route, about 50 km, from Rangsit via Hua Lampong (actually Yommarat) to the new Bangkok international airport in Nong Ngu Hao.

The BTS said at the BOI Fair that BTS will join with Siemens and Shanghai Metro Co. td. to put a skytrain line on the part where Hopewell was supposed to run an elevated train with a junction to skytrain tracks at Phayathai Station. This is probably one reason that BTS declined to make an extension from Onnut to NongNgoo Hao Airport.

Concession at Old Mor Chit Terminal at Risk

From *Bangkok Post* – February 18, 2000

Sun Estate Co must pay the Bangkok Mass Transit System Co (BTSC) 770 million baht this month or risk losing its concession for the commercial complex at the old Mor Chit bus terminal on Phahon Yothin road.

A Finance Ministry source said the demand had been made by a new Treasury committee set up to calculate how much Sun Estate should pay the Skytrain developer for the foundation level of the two-story train depot building. The site is also earmarked for extra floors in the future.

The committee comprises representatives from the Siam Architects Association, the Engineering Institute of Thailand, the Public Works Department and the Treasury Department.

It sent a demand for payment to Sun Estate last month, with a 30-day deadline, due this month.

“If the company fails to pay, the Treasury Department can cite this as a reason to revoke the 30-year concession on the whole Mor Chit area. Under current economic conditions, Sun Estate is unlikely to find the money to pay,” the source said.

Princess Sirindhorn Performing Official Naming Ceremony Next Monday

– *Thai Post*, February 18, 2000

Princess Sirindhorn is going to perform the official royal naming ceremony for the Skytrain at 10:45 AM on February 21, 2000 – Siam Square Station. The Sukhumvit line will be named “The 6th Cycle Anniversary of His Majesty – Skytrain Line 1” (Rotfaifah Chaloemphrakiat 6 Raub Saai 1) and the Silom line will be named “The 6th Cycle Anniversary of His Majesty – Skytrain Line 2” (Rotfaifah Chaloemphrakiat 6 Raub Saai 2). Both names come from His Majesty The King so they are very auspicious names.

Deputy Ministry of Transportation and Communication Pradit Phatharaprasit said that the BTSC confirms to him that the company declined to make Nong Ngoo Hao Airport extension (Onnut Station to Nong Ngoo Hao Airport) since the line is not feasible to invest in. The BTS prefers the Samrong Extension instead. Nevertheless, SRT (State Railway of Thailand) already has a project to extend the line to Nong Ngoo Hao Airport by laying a 4-km double track from Lad Krabang Railway Station (near Rom Klao Road) to the airport.

The Skytrain Cannot Solve Traffic Jams

After two months of service, the OCMLT concluded that the Skytrain has cut the car usage by only 40,000 cars out of 1 million cars in the Bangkok metro area—only a 4.8% reduction in daily car usage. BTS also carries only 160,000-180,000 passengers a day which is very low in comparison to mass transit projects in other countries. Therefore, OCLMT is planning a Park and Ride at Mo Chit area as well as developing mass transit networks to cut the car usage by 50%. The park and ride will be a 20-acre area at the former casting workshop of Don Muang Tollway, but OCMLT has to negotiate with the BMA and SRT—the owners of the area—so the construction of park and ride facility will be possible. OCMLT also plans to improve the road around Mo Chit Bus terminal to accommodate about 2,300 BMTA buses, microbuses, taxi cabs and shuttle vans.

BTSC declined to send a delegate for a OCMLT meeting. However, the company said they will make a promotion campaign to boost the number of passenger by offering 25% discount for adult passengers and 35% discount for students younger than 21 (e.g for 25% discount -> paying 640 baht for a ticket but the ticket will show 800 baht—the ticket will be limited to 1000 baht total so the maximum payment would be 800 baht). This campaign will end on March 4, 2000.

The BTS line and the expressway have caused a decline in condominium sales in downtown

Bangkok (since people can get out of town easier) but has boosted rentals and sales in shopping malls in downtown Bangkok.

High-speed rail project proposed to SRT

By Choosak Jirasakunthai

Excerpted from the [Nation](#), February 18, 2000.

ASIA and Europe Industrial, a Thai transportation firm, has proposed a 40 billion baht high speed project on the Mae Klong line to the State Railway of Thailand (SRT) for consideration, said Suphol Civilize, president and chief executive officer of the company.

The new high-speed train project would extend 150 kilometers from Hua Lumpong to Pak Tho in Ratchaburi province and cover the distance within half an hour.

.... It would also be linked to the other mass transit systems.

....

The company had studied the project for 11 months, at a cost of more than 100 million baht. However, it began talks with the SRT almost 2 years before the result of the feasibility study – which was proposed to SRT for consideration three days ago.

The company is now waiting for a green light from the SRT to begin construction and system management works.

....

They were looking for concession from the government for 50 to 60 years.

“The project is expected to break even within 22 years,” he said.

He expected 600,000 to 1 million passengers daily would use the project. They could travel from Hua Lamphong to Pak Tho within half an hour.

The engineering consultant of the project is Canadian-based CPCS ,which was once the consultant for the high-speed train project in the US, TransAmerica.

The main contractor for the project would be the second largest construction firm in Italy, Astaldi.

The rail system would be managed by State Railway of Switzerland.

Australian-based Lion Heart Consultant was the project’s financial advisor of the project, he said.

The first phase of the project was planned to be operational by April 2004 and the second, from Hua Lumphong, would be operational by September 2004.

The rail system would be part of a Trans-Asia route, because the company also wanted to extend the system to Malaysia.

Updates from Thai Newspapers!

February 3, 2000

Fare Discounts

BTS is going to have a 20% discount for normal passengers a 30% discount for students (stored value tickets of course!) to boost the number of customers effective in February 2000. Students will get special stored-value tickets imported from the US which will have distinctive forms and light up for a few seconds when using the tickets to prevent fraud by normal passengers.

Feeder Lines

The 13 feeder bus lines will be in service around June or July 2000. These lines must allow the passengers to pay both bus and Skytrain fare (with swipe cards) on the bus so the feeder buses will add even more passengers to the Skytrain.

Skytrain “Down”

On January 22, 2000 there was a “disconnection” between hardware and software of the BTS computer control systems causing a two-hour suspension of the service (from 11AM-1PM). BTS is going to sue Siemens for this humiliating error.

Skytrain Weddings

On Valentine’s Day, 72 couples will be wed at Chong Nonsee station. (*Thai Post Daily*, January 24-25, 2000).

Park and Ride

BMA will create a Park and Ride in the open space in Queen Sirikit Park, a park situated

between Chatuchak Park and Mo Chit 2 Bus terminal as a parking lot. There will be free shuttle vans going between this parking lot and Mo Chit station. The lot will be opened on Valentine's Day 2000.

Skytrain Extensions

The BMA news from *Thai Post Daily* (January 28, 2000) reports that the committee of 9 agencies (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, NESDB, Supreme Attorney, OCMLT, BMA and other 3 agencies) had an informal meeting to plan for the immediate start of the BTS extension project after receiving final approval from both the Cabinet and the Committee of National Environment Policies. The results from this informal meeting were that the fare rate should follow the old 10-40 baht rate and allow the BTS to construct the extensions without calling for a new bid for the contractor. However, the committee has to consult the Council of State whether the BTS extension project is considered as the old BTS or new BTS project. If the Council of State considers this extension project as the old project, the old fare rate (10-40 baht) will be the mandatory for BTS to follow; otherwise, the BTS can issue the new fare rate. If the old contractor (Italian-Thai PCL) cannot function as the contractor for this extension, it will be necessary to call a new bid. BTS will submit the BTS extension plans to BMA in March 2000.

Skytrain Extension News – Line R

According to ITV, BMA has designated the code for Rama III extension as “R”, so the station list of this feeder line will be:

First Phase (Rama III Extension)	Second Phase (just a proposed route)
R1 Thung Mahamek	R10 Wat Dokmai
R2 Chan Road	R11 Rama IX Bridge
R3 Yannawa	R12 Nuea-Tai Road
R4 Rama III	R13 Bang Khau Laem
R5 Nonsee Road	R14 Thanon Tok
R6 Wat Klong Mai	R15 Wat Phraya Krai
R7 Wat Dan	R16 Southern Bangkok District Court
R8 Wat Pariwat	R17 Wat Sutthiwararam
R9 Sathupradid Pier	

Both ends of this feeder line are Saphan Taksin Station (S6) and Chong Nonsee Station (S3).

Skytrain Extensions Approved

– *Thairath Daily* (<http://www.thairath.co.th>), January 4, 2000, said that Saphaphat (National Economic and Social Development Board – <http://www.nesdb.go.th>) approved the BMA proposal to extend the BTS Skytrain lines with a total investment of 32.52 billion baht (US\$ 813-929.14 million).

Extension Lines

- 1) **Taksin Extension** – 2.2 km, costing 4,568 million baht (US\$114.2-130.5 million)
- 2) **Samrong Extension** – 8.9 km, costing 15,154 million baht (around US\$378.85-432.97 million)
- 3) **Rama II Extension (Feeder Line)** – 8.5 km, costing 12,798 million baht (around US\$319.95-365.66 million)

It will take full 3 years to complete these three extension projects, with financial benefit of 13.89% and economic benefit of 17.20%. BMA will find investors for these projects with a 30-year concession. BTSC is the most likely investor for this project. Shanghai Bank in China has strong interest to finance this project.

For the fare, BMA will use 10-40 baht rate -> first station, you pay 10 baht, and the payment increases 5 baht in every 2 stations until it reaches the maximum at 40 baht (from the 12th station to the end of line) – this is the same fare rate as the current BTS fare rate.

Samrong Extensions
(BMA Proposed)

>From Mo Chit Station to
On Nut – 40 baht
Samphob Naruemit – 40 baht
Punnnawithee – 40 baht
Udomsuk – 40 baht
Bearing – 40 baht
Thepharak – 40 baht
Samrong Tai – 40 baht

>From Samrong Tai to
Thepharak – 10 baht
Bearing – 15 baht
Udomsuk – 15 baht
Punnnawithee – 20 baht
Samphob Naruemit – 20 baht
On Nut – 25 baht
Mo Chit – 40 baht

Rama III Extensions
(BMA Proposed)

>From Mo Chit Station to
Chong Nonsee – 40 baht
Thung Mahamek – 40 baht
Chan Road – 40 baht
Yannawa – 40 baht
Rama III – 40 baht
Nonsee Road – 40 baht
Wat Klong Mai – 40 baht
Wat Dan – 40 baht
Wat Pariwat – 40 baht
Sathupradid Pier – 40 baht

>From Sathupradid Pier to
Wat Pariwat- 10 baht
Wat Dan – 15 baht
Wat Klong Mai – 15 baht
Nonsee Road – 20 baht
Rama III – 20 baht
Yannawa – 25 baht
Chan Road – 25 baht
Thung Mahamek – 30 baht
Chong Nonsee – 30 baht
Mo Chit – 40 baht

Taksin Extensions
(BMA Proposed)

>From Mo Chit Station to
Taksin Bridge – 40 baht
Krung Thonburi – 40 baht
Wongwian Yai – 40 baht

>From Wongwian Yai Station to
Krung Thonburi – 10 baht
Taksin Bridge – 15 baht
Mo Chit – 40 baht

The extension projects will require importation of materials and machines costing 12,458.30 million baht (US\$311.46-355.95 million) but it is not expected to hurt the trade balance in the long run.

Long-Promised and Long-Delayed Handicapped Access Issues

– *Thaipost* (<http://www.thaipost.net>), January 5, 2000, stated that BMA is trying to convince BTSC to accept the seven proposals from the Handicapped Council of Thailand to facilitate access to the Skytrain. The 7 proposals are:

- 1) Every handicapped person can use the elevators without discrimination by showing the station officers their handicapped ID card.
- 2) 20 baht flat rate tickets. For the first phase, record the names of handicapped persons and then allow those persons to receive reimbursement from the Handicapped Council of Thailand. If there is very large number of handicapped persons using the Skytrain, the BTS should issue special tickets for them.
- 3) For the handicapped who require assistants to carry them, the assistants pay the normal rates.
- 4) The handicapped pay the special flat rate if they use the elevators. If they use the normal entrance they pay the normal rate.
- 5) Special space for the handicapped at the platforms should be provided with clear signs and signals as well as special surfaces to direct the blind.
- 6) BMA partially agrees that the senior citizens and those in late pregnancy (around 7-9 months) can use elevators if necessary.
- 7) Construction of roofs to cover the slopes from the front of elevators to the platforms to shield from rain and heat.

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Happy New Year from a Thai Santa

December 31, 2000

Categories: New Year's Eve

Happy New Year from a Thai Santa

From December 31, 2000: *This is a wall display at the Asian Hotel at Hat Yai in southern Thailand. It shows Santa with a Thai drum holding his hands up which indicates he is dancing in a traditional Thai style.*



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)