

## Phase 2 of MRT plan blueprint to be ready in August

Initial blueprints for the second master plan of mass rapid transit development in Bangkok and its metropolitan area are set to conclude this August, Transport Minister Arkhom Termpittayapaisith said.



Feasibility studies for the plan are being conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) under the Japanese government.

Referred to by transport organisations as "M-MAP2", the plan is a successor to M-MAP1 which covered the construction of 10 electric train lines and extensions of existing lines by 2029.

These include the MRT Orange Line (Thailand Cultural Centre-Min Buri); the SRT Red Line (Taling Chan-Bang Sue-Rangsit); the MRT Pink Line monorail (Khae Rai-Min Buri) and the MRT Yellow Line monorail (Lat Phrao-Samrong).

M-MAP2 will focus on development projects for a Bang Sue station, tipped to replace Hua Lamphong as the central railway hub of Bangkok, Mr Arkhom said after Jica met with Thai representatives at the Transport Ministry Monday.

"Our discussions have also included development plans for Makkasan and Mae Nam railway stations, with the State Railway of Thailand [SRT] currently overseeing the plans for both," he said. "We have asked Jica to include possible bus routes into their feasibility studies [as opposed to] exclusively drafting up electric train routes," he said.

Mr Arkhom said the next meeting between Thai representatives and Jica will take place at the end of the month.

The Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning (OTP) has stated in recent reports that electric train lines that could form part of M-MAP2 include the planned Grey Line monorail from Watcharaphon (Ram Intra Road) to Rama IX Bridge, the Gold Line from Krung Thon Buri BTS station to Prajadhipok (via Khlong San) and the Brown Line monorail from Khae Rai to Lam Sali.

Feasibility studies for the Brown Line are being conducted by the OTP. Although the project was not introduced as part of the first master plan, the government wants it wrapped up relatively quickly, which would force it into M-MAP2.

The construction of that line has drawn the ire of Kasetsart University officials and locals as it also involves the construction of an additional expressway close to the university.

"It is difficult to say at this point whether the Brown Line will make it into M-MAP1," OTP director-general Chaiwat Thongkamkoon said Monday.

"Some projects in the first master plan have not been settled yet, so it's unlikely the line will be included yet."

The Purple Line's southern extension from Tao Poon to Ratburana is up for auction and will be included, the reports said.