

BOOST FOR SKYTRAIN, SUBWAY**MALLS PLAN PARK-AND-RIDE FACILITIES****Move** targets suburban commuters, pending talks on feeKWANCHAI RUNGFAPAISARN
THE NATION

The Thai Shopping Centre Association announced yesterday that it planned to help extend Bangkok's BTS Skytrain and MRT subway routes by providing park-and-ride facilities for suburban commuters.

The TSCA says the measure will reduce traffic congestion in metropolitan areas.

Naris Cheyklin, the new president of the association, said it was pushing for new government policies to encourage commuters to use the mass-transit system. This could help reduce traffic congestion in metropolitan areas and result in less pollution from vehicles and better health for the general public.

As they would be spending less time stuck in traffic, people would be less likely to be stressed out and their mental health would significantly improve, said Naris, who is also senior vice president of finance, accounting and property management for Central Pattana. In the long run, he said, this could help reduce the government's burden of healthcare costs.

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malls, especially those in areas close to the BTS and MRT stations, on allocating parking spaces for park-and-ride facilities. The negotiation will be on the parking charges to be paid by individual car owners, as the fees must be cheap and competitive with those [parking areas] owned by BTS and MRT," Naris said. He added that the park-and-ride plan would be finalised by the third quarter of the year.

The 10 members of the TSCA are Future Park, The Mall Group, MBK, Seacon Square, CPN, Fashion Island, Siam Future Development (developer of Esplanade, La Villa and J Avenue), The Platinum Fashion Mall, Siam Piwat and KE Land (developer of Crystal Park and CDC). Their malls occupy more than 8.5 million square metres of total retail space, as well as parking spaces able to serve more than 200,000 vehicles.

"Our members operate about 50 shopping malls throughout Bangkok, and half of them are in areas close to BTS or MRT stations. The park-and-ride plan will provide a win-win solution to the government, society, and ourselves, as there will be more people traffic coming into the shopping malls," Naris said.

The association also encourages energy-saving initiatives and environmental-conservation projects.

"On behalf of the association, we would like to urge the government to grant some privileges, such as on import duty, to the mall developers that have imported energy-saving or environment-friendly construction materials," Naris said.