Press Statement

The Hon. Wayne Furbert, JP, MP Minister of Transport

Throne Speech Initiatives

Date: Wednesday 15th November, 2023

Good day members of the Media and Members of the Public:

Today, I am pleased to provide the details and essential components of the Ministry of Transport’s Throne Speech Initiatives announced last Friday 3rd of November. These initiatives notably include the introduction of a Digital Fare Media system and the continuation of the harmonization and modernization of public service vehicle industry.

Let me first provide you with an overview of the Digital Fare Media System we are set to implement. This cutting edge system will replace traditional paper tickets with modern, contactless methods such as smart cards and mobile applications. The core of this transformation lies in leveraging technology to simplify the process of using public transportation and making it more accessible and user friendly for all.

The Digital Fare Media System will streamline the payment process, reducing boarding times and enhancing the overall efficiency of our public transportation services. This, in turn, will contribute to a more punctual and reliable transit system. By adopting a digital payment system, we are poised to see a significant improvement in revenue collection. The transparency and traceability of digital transactions will minimize the chances of revenue leakage, ensuring that every dollar rightfully contributes to the development of our transportation infrastructure.
Going digital means a reduction in paper usage and, consequently, a positive impact on our environment. This aligns with our commitment to sustainable practices and environmental conservation, contributing to a cleaner, greener Bermuda.

The people of Bermuda and our visitors will experience the ease of seamless travel without the hassle of carrying physical tickets or exact change. The Digital Fare Media System allows for cashless transactions, enabling commuters to pay for their rides using smart cards or mobile apps, making public transportation more accessible to all. The implementation of this system will empower commuters with real time information on routes, schedules, and service updates by way of a GPS system. This ensures that the people of Bermuda and visitors can plan their journeys more efficiently, reducing waiting times and uncertainties.

The Digital Fare Media System is designed to be inclusive, catering to people of all ages and backgrounds. We are committed to ensuring that technology does not create barriers but rather acts as a tool to unite and simplify the lives of our people and of course visitors alike. This is not just a technological upgrade; it is a commitment to the future of transportation in Bermuda. As we embrace innovation, we are laying the foundation for a more efficient, sustainable, and people centric public transportation system that will benefit us all.

Over the past years, the Ministry of Transport has been steadfast and dedicated to the harmonization and modernization of the public service vehicles industry. The persistent challenges within the industry have endured for numerous years. It is imperative to synchronize Bermuda’s transportation system with current standards and best practices. This commitment of change is rooted in the pursuit of a more efficient, accessible, and forward looking transportation system that will undoubtedly enhance the lives of our residents and visitors as well.

Immediately upon my appointment as the Minister of Transport I engaged the Taxi industry by meeting with various stakeholders including individual taxi owners. We discussed the long outstanding topic of Taxi rates and the relevant increases. Deliberations have followed and it is the intent to finally address this matter. The outstanding issue now demands immediate attention and decisive action.

Let me make two things abundantly clear, firstly, the proposed changes are not designed to devalue permits or devalue any public service vehicle business model. The value of a public service vehicle or business is contingent upon the forces of the free market and influenced by
economic indicators at the time of a purchase or sale. Secondly, the objective for the taxi rates is to have an increase before the next season begins.

The goal of harmonization is not a solitary endeavor; it requires collaboration. We have actively engaged with industry stakeholders and relevant associations, to garner insights and perspectives. Through open dialogue and cooperative efforts, we are fostering an environment where all parties contribute to the development of policies that serve the best interests of the public.

Modernization is not merely about embracing technology; it is about making transportation more accessible and user friendly. This inclusivity driven approach is designed to improve the overall experience for individuals with diverse needs and preferences.

A robust and modern transportation system is integral to economic prosperity. By fostering a conducive environment for the public service vehicles industry, we anticipate increased economic activity, job creation, and improved visitor experiences. This, in turn, will have a positive ripple effect on the livelihoods of our people.

Through all of the initiatives just mentioned, we are not only addressing immediate challenges but also laying the groundwork for a sustainable and technologically advanced future. Together, let us embrace this transformative journey towards a better connected and more prosperous Bermuda.

Thank you.