



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

The Ministry of Transport

Press Statement

The Hon. Wayne Furbert, JP, MP

Minister of Transport

Throne Speech Initiatives

Date: Tuesday 8th November, 2022

Good Day Members of the Media and Members of the Public,

Today, I am pleased to provide the details and critical elements of the Ministry of Transport's Throne Speech Initiatives announced last Friday 4th of November.

Before doing so, I would also like to highlight some of the successes of the Ministry of Transport, particularly the updates on the initiatives from the prior Throne Speech of 2021.

In 2021, during the height of the pandemic, Bermuda was successful with its homeporting initiative with Viking Cruise Line, regular calls from Crystal Cruises and Norwegian Cruise Line and one visit from The World which brought 36 calls and 14,203 visitors to our shores. This activity created an economic impact of approximately 11.4 million dollars. This year we are estimating to end the season with an estimate of 166 cruise ship calls, with approximately 395 thousand passengers equating to an estimate of \$156.1 million in economic activity. In 2023 Bermuda is looking forward to hosting over 200 calls. This is a testament to the relationships that have been built with the cruise lines, inclusive of the newly implemented year-round cruise ship calls to

Bermuda. The cruise calls will naturally create more activity at their designated landing ports. These are certainly successes that will assist the country in its economic recovery.

Coinciding with the successes of the cruise industry, the Ministry of Transport's Air Service Development Strategy continues to position Bermuda for transformational change in the commercial aviation industry to be ready for uncertainty and to aid economic recovery. Consultation has been held with the various stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive and robust approach is considered. Data has been collected from international aviation authorities such as International Air Transportation Association (IATA) and International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and used to provide forecast post COVID recovery. The success of the SATA (Azores) flights initiative this summer provided a template that can work within the strategy. This direct route increased opportunities for inbound tourism and for Bermuda residents to travel to the Azores and connect to 8 other islands, Europe and beyond, and reunite with family and friends.

Every viable airline partner and option is being considered and continuous consultation is currently taking place. The Boston route is a primary priority and forms part of the discussions. The Ministry of transport remains vigilant to source a sustainable solution.

The Ministry of Transport's keenness to provide the public with access and services to evolving technology remains at the forefront. Currently person travelling by public transportation are only able to pay fares with cash, tokens, paper tickets, and passes. Our aim is to amend existing legislation to make provision to expand payment options for persons travelling on public transportation (buses and ferries). In addition to the current forms of payments, persons would be able to pay the fare by electronic ticketing. An example is digital mobile ticketing as a phone app and a wristband device. The Ministry is working on the legislation changes to make the digital fare options available to the public.

I will now highlight the plans the Ministry of Transport will endeavor to facilitate for the initiatives outlined in the 2022 Throne Speech.

The harmonization and modernization of public service vehicles are key factors to our visitor experience and ultimately our tourism industry. As the Ministry of Transport is a vital partner to the Ministry of Tourism the primary focus of the work is to ensure improved service, customer and driver safety, and consumer protection. Public service vehicles are a crucial component of the passenger transport mix in Bermuda. They allow customers to go from their chosen pickup point

directly to their destination at their preferred time. The evolving shifts in demographics, technology and social attitudes are changing peoples' expectations of public service vehicles and how they seek and use these services.

The Ministry intends to work with all the stakeholders to develop a system with a collaborative and transparent approach. The process of consultation has begun, and feedback is being received which will allow a collective methodology on how we move forward. The three critical pillars that the stakeholders agree is that fairness, equity and enforcement are all fundamental to move into this next phase for public service vehicles.

The Ministry will consider the feedback received and continue to ensure the sector is kept abreast of the developments. During this legislative year, the Ministry will review current public service vehicle legislation, policies, and procedures to ensure they are relevant, consistent, and practical and help protect stakeholders and users alike.

The Ministry of Transport's will also embark on a National Electric Vehicle Policy and Strategy for Bermuda, which will set out a plan to phase out the sale and importation of internal combustion engine vehicles by 2035. Transportation is a primary contributor of greenhouse gases around the world and reducing or eliminating emissions from transport will not only reduce Bermuda's contribution to climate change but improve local air quality and reduce Bermuda's dependence on foreign oil.

Bermuda has already experienced success this summer from the launch of operation of the first thirty electric public buses. The buses have been in operation for over six months and have saved the Department of Public Transportation (DPT) an estimated \$50,000 in fuel costs alone. These savings do not include maintenance costs, which are expected to be nearly half those of diesel buses. Early experience in the maintenance shop indicates that the required services are simple and quick to complete. Additionally, these buses have led to significant energy and emissions savings over the summer. About 120,000 liters of diesel fuel were avoided through August, equivalent to the fuel burned over a typical 8-hour transatlantic flight.

The Ministry's introduction to a National Electric Vehicle Policy can only multiply the benefits experienced this summer with the electric busses alone. As the global vehicle market moves towards electric vehicles, it will become increasingly important for Bermuda to prepare for this transition.

Bermuda has already started the electric vehicle transition, with fully electric rental car fleets, select private vehicle, and the recently introduced electric public buses. Being less than 25 miles long and 2 miles at its widest point, the island is a prime candidate for EVs without the need for long-range vehicles or frequent charging. However, most of the nearly 22,000 licensed private vehicles are still internal combustion engine vehicles. The slow pace of adoption can be attributed in part to the limited availability of EV models on the island. To this end, the Ministry will review sizes of EV's so that more models are made available. The Ministry of Transport views the advancement of this policy as a significant development for Bermuda that will create a multitude of benefits for the environment and the people.

The Project Ride Programme was developed to provide our young riders with tools to establish safe riding habits. The programme has transformed and expanded over many years to ensure the new and young riders are provided with structured training sessions to give the riders a good foundation to ride on our roads safely and correctly. In 2010 the Project Ride Programme became a mandatory component for teenagers wishing to acquire a licence to ride an auxiliary bicycle. Also, at this time, the name of the driving licence became the "Bermuda Youth Licence" which contained various conditions. The programme processes between 400 – 600 persons per year. However, the practical skills attained by the graduates have constantly been challenged due to the absence of on-road training. The first time a Bermuda Youth Licence holder interacts with actual traffic is after they have obtained their licence. This is too late.

To improve on this practice, regulations will be drafted for auxiliary bicycles to allow for creating a Learner's Permit. This permit will only be issued after the student successfully passes the theory exam and reaches the age of 16 years. The permit can then be used for instruction and the final riding exams on public roads.

The new procedure aligns with acquiring a licence in other categories and Bermuda Youth Licence holders will be better prepared to encounter the public roads which would ultimately result in safer streets for Bermuda.

The commitment of the Ministry is steadfast to the people of Bermuda. We are dedicated to working with our partners and stakeholders to move Bermuda forward diligently and progressively.

Thank you.