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Channel NewsAsia

December 18, 2011 Sunday 1:11 PM GMT

## Investigations should uncover adequacy of train maintenance: analysts

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 359 words

SINGAPORE: A formal inquiry has been called to uncover the reasons behind the recent train disruptions.

Analysts said besides dealing with technical faults, the Committee of Inquiry should also determine if the current system of maintenance is adequate.

The breakdowns and chaos caused are not just technical problems, but situations that called into question the adequacy of contingency plans.

Dr Park Byung Joon, head, Urban Transport Management, SIM University, said: "It is actually very dangerous for passengers to take action on their own.

"For example, you are not supposed to jump onto the track just because the train stopped.

"The operator themselves, they have to assess the current system correctly.

"Because to inform the passengers what to do, they first have to know exactly what happened."

Associate Professor **Lee Der Horng**, Department of Civil Engineering, National University of Singapore, said: "We are now talking about a modernised transportation network. So any failure, any malfunction to the system, will trigger a lot of impact.

"Just by getting the passengers to look for alternative transportation modes by themselves is a bit unrealistic."

Dr **Lee** said contingency plans should also involve the other public transport operator, SBS Transit.

For instance, it can be roped in to ensure commuters get evacuated quickly.

The affected North-South Line, running since 1987, is the oldest rail line in Singapore.

And some said its age is one reason for the faults.

Analysts questioned the sufficiency of the maintenance regime, and asked if the regulator should take on greater responsibility.

Dr **Lee Der Horng** said: "Do we have a system to monitor, to regulate the operators? So that we can ensure the proper maintenance and the proper actions have been taken care to our transportation systems."

The formal inquiry will certainly go some way in reassuring commuters the government is taking the matter seriously.

Investigations should uncover adequacy of train maintenance: analysts Channel NewsAsia December 18, 2011 Sunday 1:11 PM GMT

In order to restore confidence in the system, analysts said the inquiry process must be transparent, the findings easily understood and accepted by the public, and the committee must also present a clear action plan to resolve the problems.

**SUBJECT:** INVESTIGATIONS (91%); RAILROAD MAINTENANCE (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (90%); URBAN RAIL SYSTEMS (90%); INDUSTRY ANALYSTS (90%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (89%); ENGINEERING (78%); TRAINS (78%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (78%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (71%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (71%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (94%)

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Channel NewsAsia

February 1, 2012 Wednesday 6:46 AM GMT

## LTA to purchase more trains for NEL, CCL

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 629 words

SINGAPORE: Overcrowding on Singapore's train network is expected to ease further from 2015.

The government and transport operators will progressively add more capacity than previously announced - with investments totalling S\$600 million.

The contracts for more trains for the North-East and Circle lines, and upgrading signalling systems for the North-South and East-West Lines, were awarded on Wednesday.

Ridership on Singapore's two newest lines - the North-East and Circle lines - is expected to increase further in the coming years.

The North-East Line saw an annual ridership of 156 million last year.

Since the opening of the Circle Line (CCL) 4 and 5 in October last year, the average daily ridership on the CCL has been around 300,000.

So capacity will be added to enhance service levels and meet future demand.

Eighteen trains - instead of the 12 previously announced - will be injected into the North-East Line progressively from 2015. This will increase peak capacity by 70 per cent.

The CCL - which connects all the lines - will have 16 new trains, increasing peak capacity by 40 per cent.

Associate Professor **Lee Der-Horng** from the Department of Civil Engineering at the National University of Singapore said: "The Circle Line, even though it is the newest line, is very critical in terms of the role.

"The main function is to provide the connections with the North-East Line, the East-West Line and the North-South Line. It is very much necessary to increase or to boost the capacity for the Circle Line.

"If the Circle Line can provide a bigger role to move the passengers, then this will enhance the overall passenger handling capacity for our MRT system."

Some are hopeful the added capacity will improve the travelling experience, but they had concerns.

One commuter said: "The timing is too long to wait until 2015."

Another noted: "It will help us to ease the crowding problem, because sometimes at peak hours, the train is quite jammed."

A third commented: "That is good, as sometimes we have to wait very long for one train."

Yet another said: "One possibility (is) because of the frequency, we have to increase the train fares. That will be a concern. But otherwise, I think it will be a good point, a good step forward."

Commuters can also expect shorter waiting times on the North-South and East-West lines.

The current signalling system on the North-South and East-West lines has been in operation since 1987. And the Land Transport Authority has said it is time to improve its performance.

SMRT has signed an agreement with a contractor to undertake the project. The replacement work will cover more than 100 kilometres of tracks and involves the designing and installing of new signalling system.

Under the existing "fixed block system", trains travel one block apart from each other. A time gap of at least 120 seconds is required between a train leaving a station and the one entering it.

The new communication-based system, which can track the train's precise location and speed, will reduce the gap to 100 seconds.

Professor **Lee Der-Hong** explained: "The conventional approach in the MRT control is they use the fixed system, which means that in between the trains, they have to reserve certain safety gap, safety distance.

"But with the communication-based system, the train control centre will have a much better idea... about the exact location of the train, so therefore the gap between the train no longer needs to be fixed - it can become a variable.

"So therefore, we can shorten the distance between the trains, and therefore, we are able to pump and provide more train services on the tracks so the capacity can be improved."

The project, which will cost S\$195 million, is slated for completion in 2016 for the North-South Line, and 2018 for the East-West Line.

**SUBJECT:** TRAINS (89%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (78%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (73%); ENGINEERING (72%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (66%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (96%)

**LOAD-DATE:** February 1, 2012

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

June 10, 2011 Friday

## 'Not enough to just boost bus capacity'; They must also be given priority on roads, say experts

**BYLINE:** By Royston Sim

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 587 words

TO IMPROVE the bus network and commuters' experience on buses, it is not enough to simply increase bus capacity, said those in the industry.

This has to be paired with measures that give priority to buses on the road, they said.

On Wednesday, Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew said there is a need to 'add significant capacity into the bus network'.

The Government will work more closely with transport operators to inject this capacity in a 'very timely fashion', he said. Details will be shared later.

Observers said the simplest ways of adding capacity include buying more buses, buying bigger buses such as double-deckers, and hiring more drivers to increase bus frequencies.

But transport economist Michael Li of the Nanyang Business School said simply adding capacity may not work, as buses are held up by traffic congestion during peak hours.

Planners need to consider giving systemwide priority to buses in the form of more bus lanes or full-day bus lanes, he said.

While such a move will be unpopular to motorists, who already face heavy traffic islandwide during peak hours, Dr Li said: 'If you want to make public transport a preferred choice, you should do it.'

There are currently 155km of normal bus lanes and 23km of full-day bus lanes, which increase bus journey speeds by an average of 7 per cent. Other priority measures here include the Mandatory Give Way to Buses scheme and bus priority signals.

Associate Professor **Lee Der Horng**, a National University of Singapore (NUS) transport researcher, said existing measures are inadequate.

'Buses cannot be at the mercy of congestion. If we put more buses and don't do other things, traffic conditions will only worsen,' he said.

Having more bus lanes is the way to go, and public buses must be accorded preferential treatment in a 'more aggressive way', he said.

Associate Professor Anthony Chin, who specialises in transport economics at NUS, suggested adding bus lanes on a smaller scale in a HDB estate as a trial, rather than doing it nationwide.

'Not enough to just boost bus capacity'; They must also be given priority on roads, say experts The Straits Times (Singapore) June 10, 2011 Friday

Assistant Professor Paul Barter of the NUS **Lee** Kuan Yew School of Public Policy said it is also crucial that all-day bus frequencies are improved, to attract people who can afford a car or use taxis a lot.

'Peak periods are when the capacity problems are, but off-peak frequency is also important, so that more people see the bus system as an attractive and comprehensive alternative,' he said.

Ramping up capacity will result in greater initial investments and greater operating costs than what bus operators SMRT and SBS Transit had planned for their bus operations this year, said Royal Bank of Scotland Asia Securities transport analyst John Rachmat.

Both operators declined to comment on how they would be affected.

Prof Barter said that, while the Government has always been wary of offering subsidies for public transport, there may be other ways to help operators with the costs. One possibility is to have the Land Transport Authority own all the buses and have the operators lease them, he said.

Prof **Lee** suggested 'indirect subsidies', on top of an earlier move to exempt public buses from paying an Additional Registration Fee. He said this could take the form of reduced road taxes or waivers on the Electronic Road Pricing system.

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## TACKLE CONGESTION TOO

**'Buses cannot be at the mercy of congestion. If we put more buses and don't do other things, traffic conditions will only worsen.'**

Associate Professor **Lee Der Horng**, a NUS transport researcher

**SUBJECT:** MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (90%); VEHICLE TRAFFIC (90%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (89%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (89%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (86%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (78%); PUBLIC POLICY (76%); BUSINESS EDUCATION (74%); TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (72%)

**COMPANY:** ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND GROUP PLC (60%)

**TICKER:** RBS (NYSE) (60%); RBS (LSE) (60%); RBS (AMS) (60%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS551111 OFFICES OF BANK HOLDING COMPANIES (60%); NAICS522110 COMMERCIAL BANKING (60%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** HENAN, CHINA (58%) SINGAPORE (90%); ASIA (79%); CHINA (58%)

**LOAD-DATE:** June 9, 2011

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** Overcrowding on buses is a bugbear for commuters who use public transport. Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew has said that there is a need to "add significant capacity into the bus network". -- ST PHOTO: MALAVIKA SINGH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

4 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

March 17, 2012 Saturday

## Rail breakdowns 'common elsewhere'

**SECTION:** PRIME NEWS

**LENGTH:** 408 words

INDUSTRY observers said rail breakdowns also occur elsewhere though the severity may not be on the same scale as here.

Transport researcher **Lee Der-Hong** of the National University of Singapore said breakdowns are not uncommon in metros elsewhere but they are resolved much more quickly.

Dr **Lee**, who is from Taiwan, cited the Taipei metro as an example. 'It has experienced a series of service disruptions, but not to the scale that we have been seeing in Singapore.'

He pointed out that the Taipei metro - which is nationalised - is ranked tops for reliability by world rapid transit ranking bodies CoMET and Nova.

Dr Park Byung Joon, programme head of the master of science programme in urban transport management at SIM University, said rail breakdowns are not isolated to Singapore.

'It is a common problem in all cities with metro lines,' said Dr Park, who is Korean.

'A more stringent maintenance scheme can reduce the occurrences of such disruptions. However, it comes with cost.

'It is easier to say 'let's have more stringent maintenance system'. But it is very expensive to implement.'

Dr Vukan Vuchic, a University of Pennsylvania foundation professor of transportation engineering, who teaches transport systems studies and is an industry consultant of more than 40 years, said rail rapid transit is 'by far the most reliable and safe mode of urban transportation' if it is run properly.

He said delays and breakdowns have to be analysed 'with respect to their causes as well as the procedures used to recover them'.

'For example, a suicide in some cities causes a two- to three-hour stoppage on an entire line; in other cities, the intervention to re-establish the service is so well-organised that the delays for suicides average only 20 minutes,' he added.

Chairman of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport Cedric Foo said SBS Transit should get to the bottom of the cause of Thursday's 10-hour disruption 'as soon as possible and then communicate with the commuting public on what will be done to avoid a recurrence'.

But he avoided a direct reply when asked if he thought the number of incidents in recent months was one too many or acceptable, saying 'we should always strive to minimise disruptions as each single disruption affects many thousands of commuters'.

'We all await SBS Transit's investigations and assurances that what can be done will be done,' he added.

**CHRISTOPHER TAN**

**SUBJECT:** RANKINGS (90%); INVESTIGATIONS (89%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (89%); DELAYS & POSTPONEMENTS (89%); TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE (78%); ENGINEERING (78%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (77%); CITY LIFE (76%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (73%); CONSULTING SERVICES (69%); SUICIDE (69%)

**ORGANIZATION:** UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA (55%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** TAIPEI, TAIWAN (93%) SINGAPORE (94%); TAIWAN (93%)

**LOAD-DATE:** March 16, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

5 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

September 4, 2010 Saturday

## More trains, shorter waiting times welcome in Singapore

**BYLINE:** Melissa Sim & Maria Almenoar

**LENGTH:** 700 words

CUTTING the waiting time for trains by one minute may not seem like much, but it will help ease the overcrowding situation in carriages - the most common complaint of commuters in Singapore.

So said several transport experts, who were commenting on moves by the Land Transport Authority to put 22 more trains on the North-South and East-West Mass Rapid Transit lines by 2012.

The moves, announced on Thursday, will reduce waiting times for commuters to between two and three minutes, down from the 2.5-4.5 minutes now.

The experts contacted said the biggest result of this change will be trains that are less crowded.

Said National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng**: 'As the trains come in at a faster pace, passengers will be moved along the line quicker. There will be also be more space to fit in waiting passengers.'

Professor Henry Fan of the school of civil and environmental engineering at Nanyang Technological University agreed that shortening the intervals between train arrivals would ease the overcrowding situation.

Prof Fan, who does research in the transport field, added that even though the waiting time would be reduced by a minute, the psychological impact would be significant. 'Waiting time is more intolerable when you're not on the train. So if the trains come more frequently, psychologically you don't feel like you're waiting that long to get to the destination,' he explained.

The LTA's announcement came after Prime Minister **Lee Hsien Loong** promised during the National Day Rally that the Government would 'do everything possible' to ease the overcrowding situation on trains, which many Singaporeans have blamed on the number of foreigners here.

Adding more trains is a temporary fix. More permanent solutions are in the pipeline: Upgrading the signalling system - which handles the timing and safety of trains - will shorten the time between trains even more, while building new lines will further ease overcrowding.

But doing this will take between six and 10 years, so in the meantime, having trains that arrive a little more frequently will be of some help, said Mr Ong Kian Min, a member of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport. 'If passengers miss one train, they only have to wait a short while before the next one comes along... This will also ease the bottleneck along sections like Jurong East.'

Checks done by The Straits Times, meanwhile, show that trains here are less crowded than those in major foreign cities like Tokyo, Hong Kong and London.

Figures from the LTA show that the passenger loading here is four people per sq m, similar to Hong Kong, where the population density is lower.

More trains, shorter waiting times welcome in Singapore The Straits Times (Singapore) September 4, 2010  
Saturday

Singapore trains are also less crowded than those in London (five people/sq m), Tokyo (seven people/sq m) and Shanghai (eight people/sq m).

Commuters who have lived abroad also praised the MRT system for its overall efficiency, cleanliness and safety.

However, they also cited connectivity and frequency as areas that could be improved upon. Commuters who have experienced the New York, London and Hong Kong train systems said the lines there were more comprehensive, with many more intersections, making them more convenient.

Singapore, too, is moving to a more comprehensive network. By next year, the Circle Line will be complete, providing much more connectivity for passengers.

By 2020, trains will also reach more areas, when the Thomson, Eastern Region and Downtown lines begin running.

One problem that can be solved right away, say commuters who have ridden in subways elsewhere, is improving Singaporeans' behaviour on trains.

Consultant Svenja Wunderlich, 32, who lived in Japan for a year, said passengers there do their bit to maximise space for others. They hold their bags close to their bodies, or place them between their legs, for instance.

The Japanese also make way for those who want to get off the train, she added, and this makes for a smooth exit. In Singapore, on the other hand, trains are less crowded, but poor passenger behaviour spoils the ride.

'It's actually a more stressful atmosphere here,' she said.

The LTA is already working on this. A campaign launched tomorrow will seek to improve gracious behaviour on trains.

**SUBJECT:** TRAINS (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (78%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (74%); ENGINEERING (74%); HEADS OF STATE & GOVERNMENT (74%); POPULATION DENSITY (73%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (73%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (72%); PRIME MINISTERS (64%)

**PERSON:** LEE HSIEN LOONG (54%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** LONDON, ENGLAND (90%) HENAN, CHINA (51%) SINGAPORE (98%); HONG KONG (91%); CHINA (51%)

**LOAD-DATE:** September 3, 2010

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

6 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

May 7, 2010 Friday

## **Commuters, experts slam cab levy at IRs; No justification for \$3 surcharge since resorts are in accessible locations**

**BYLINE:** Maria Almenoar

**LENGTH:** 700 words

COMMUTERS and transport experts are up in arms over what they say is the indiscriminate manner in which taxi companies are applying location surcharges.

Their reactions follow an announcement by the six taxi companies that a \$3 surcharge would be levied from next week on cab rides from the Marina Bay Sands (MBS) integrated resort. This follows a similar move in January at the other IR, Resorts World Sentosa (RWS).

The thrust of their complaints is that cab companies are doing as they please by imposing surcharges without justification, and commuters are winding up with the short end of the stick.

As Associate Professor **Lee Der-Hong** from the National University of Singapore put it, the location of the two resorts and the number of potential customers there mean there is very little reason to impose the surcharge.

MBS is located just off the financial district, while RWS is near VivoCity shopping centre and the St James nightclub - areas that taxis already ply.

'What is the basis of this surcharge? From my own observation, getting passengers is not a problem and the resorts are in two very good and accessible locations,' said Prof **Lee**, who specialises in transport research.

'They may start asking for surcharges in every other place soon,' he added.

Taxi companies contacted begged to differ. They said imposing a surcharge was the best way to address a mismatch in supply and demand in certain areas.

Said Prime Taxis general manager Tan Soon Chye: 'If there are not enough taxis in one place, we just have to incentivise them to go to that location.'

Prof **Lee**, however, noted that other locations where a surcharge is imposed include Changi and Seletar airports, Singapore Expo and far-flung areas like the Changi Freight Centre. A taxi surcharge works in these cases, he noted.

'These are locations that are out of the way. The surcharge is a way of compensating taxi drivers for the inconvenience of travelling to these areas,' he said.

Commuters like marketing executive Lew Jong Huat agreed: 'I can understand the airport having a surcharge because it's far away, but this is the city centre.'

Commuters, experts slam cab levy at IRs; No justification for \$3 surcharge since resorts are in accessible locations The Straits Times (Singapore) May 7, 2010 Friday

Chef Andy Chong, 38, chimed in: 'Making us pay more is wrong in principle, even if it is not a big sum.'

Singapore Management University's Professor Terence Fan, who specialises in transport economics, said the surcharge benefited both IRs, since it meant a convenient stream of taxis for their guests.

If people avoided the IRs because of transport problems, he reasoned, the property owners would suffer. That being the case, he concluded, MBS and RWS should absorb the surcharge instead of passing it on to commuters.

Both MBS and RWS lobbied the taxi companies to impose a surcharge so they would get a steady supply of cabs.

The taxi industry was deregulated in 1998, and since then cab companies have been free to change their fares or impose surcharges without approval from the authorities. They only have to inform the Public Transport Council of the changes they intend to make and give commuters enough notice to adjust to the fares - a period specified as a week under the rules.

The executive director of the Consumers Association of Singapore, Mr Seah Seng Choon, advised unhappy commuters to use their wallets to send a message. Passengers who are unhappy should opt for alternative modes of transport such as the bus or train, he said. 'Then, if the cabbies find that they no longer get business at MBS or RWS, the companies will choose not to apply the surcharge there.'

A Straits Times check found that taxis were avoiding MBS because there was no surcharge. Instead, they queued a stone's throw away at places like the Esplanade, where a \$3 city surcharge is in force.

The head of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport, Dr Lim Wee Kiak, said a surcharge should not be imposed if a handful of taxis were colluding not to go to MBS.

'There are over 20,000 taxis in Singapore; it can't be that all of them will want to do that,' he said. 'There should be enough taxis which will go where there is business. After all, there are still complaints from taxi drivers that it is difficult to make money nowadays.'

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Additional reporting by Mou Zongxiao and Linus Lin

**SUBJECT:** TAXICABS & LIMOUSINES (93%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (89%); AIRPORTS (78%); DEREGULATION (78%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (89%) SINGAPORE (93%)

**LOAD-DATE:** May 6, 2010

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

June 28, 2011 Tuesday

## Rapid transit link between Republic Poly and JB Sentral

**SECTION:** PRIME NEWS**LENGTH:** 345 words

THE highly anticipated cross-strait rapid transit system (RTS) will run between a station near Republic Polytechnic, in Woodlands, and JB Sentral, in Johor Baru.

A joint statement from Prime Minister **Lee** Hsien Loong and Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak yesterday confirmed the shape of the link, first mooted in May last year.

The Republic Polytechnic stop will also be an interchange for passengers to switch to the new Thomson MRT line. Both the RTS and the Thomson line are scheduled to be completed by 2018.

The two countries have set up a technical workgroup to finalise terms of reference for a project consultant, the statement said, noting the 'good progress' that has been made.

The workgroup, which comprises officials from both sides, intends to call a tender for the consultancy study, which will develop proposals for the link, by the end of this year.

Since the plan was announced, there has been interest in the new link and what form it would take.

Some 30,000 to 40,000 vehicles - mainly motorcycles - enter Singapore from Malaysia daily, and observers say the link could be a hassle-free alternative for motorcyclists and motorists who have to make this commute.

But Associate Professor **Lee Der Horng**, a National University of Singapore (NUS) transport researcher, said the take-up rate among commuters would depend on how extensive and connected the domestic rail transit system in Johor Baru is.

If daily commuters cannot get to the JB Sentral station easily from their homes, they would still prefer their motorcycles.

A priority for both sides, he added, should be how the link is integrated into their transit systems.

Concerns such as whether the ez-link card can be used for the link, and if commuters have to switch trains after they cross the border, are crucial for a user-friendly experience, he said.

The two governments had earlier agreed that they would co-locate their customs and immigration facilities in Singapore and Johor so RTS passengers need clear immigration only once per trip.

**RACHEL CHANG**

**SUBJECT:** HEADS OF STATE & GOVERNMENT (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (90%); IMMIGRATION (85%); PRIME MINISTERS (77%); CONSULTING SERVICES (75%); MOTOR VEHICLES (72%); INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (71%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (70%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY

Rapid transit link between Republic Poly and JB Sentral The Straits Times (Singapore) June 28, 2011  
Tuesday

PROFESSORS (66%); TERRITORIAL & NATIONAL BORDERS (64%)

**PERSON:** **LEE** HSIEN LOONG (88%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (93%); MALAYSIA (93%)

**LOAD-DATE:** June 27, 2011

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Channel NewsAsia

December 26, 2011 Monday 10:16 PM GMT

## Car park crunch: More radical solutions needed, say experts

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 426 words

SINGAPORE: Even as the authorities look into the idea of mechanised car parks, some analysts pointed out the challenges - such as maintenance and costs - with such a system.

Instead, they suggested more innovative ideas, including creating a private market for parking spaces and allocating different zones for vehicles of different sizes.

National University of Singapore transport expert **Lee Der Horng** noted that it is "very common" in some cities in the United States to group cars of similar sizes together.

Said Associate Professor **Lee**: "So the smaller cars are parked in the same zone, and it's the same for the sports utility vehicles (SUVs), for instance."

Nanyang Technological University transport economist Michael Li has a more radical suggestion: Allocate each household with a car park lot and allow those who do not own any vehicles to "rent" out their lots to others, thus creating a market which would enable demand and supply to balance out.

According to the Ministry of National Development, six in 10 Housing and Development Board (HDB) households do not own cars. About a third own one car, while 5 per cent own two or more.

The transport analysts pointed out that the cheap HDB parking fees here would escalate the carpark crunch in the years to come.

In Taipei, for instance, motorists have to pay a flat fee of as much as S\$200,000 for one parking lot, said Assoc Prof **Lee**.

He added that policymakers should think about a "market-based" solution - in which parking fees will have to be higher - for housing estates that face severe car park shortage.

Last Friday, National Development Minister Khaw Boon Wan wrote on his blog that, while new estates will come with adequate car parks, new solutions are needed in the older HDB estates "where there is little space to add new lots".

Mr Khaw has asked the HDB to look into mechanised parking systems but he noted there are "implementation issues" to be worked through.

HDB residents who spoke to TODAY generally welcomed the idea - as long as the system is thoroughly tested and properly maintained.

Some suggested a policy which require residents to secure a parking lot before they buy a vehicle - a suggestion mooted last year in this newspaper in a column by consultant Richard Hartung.

Car park crunch: More radical solutions needed, say experts Channel NewsAsia December 26, 2011  
Monday 10:16 PM GMT

Calling for a balloting system for HDB households who wish to own more than one car, IT consultant Brandon Tan, 40, said: "HDB carparks are supposed to be for the middle-class masses ... If people want a second or third car but fail to win the ballot, then they should look for alternative parking solutions." -

**SUBJECT:** PARKING SPACES & FACILITIES (95%); SPORT UTILITY VEHICLES (90%); MOTOR VEHICLES (78%); TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (78%); CONSULTING SERVICES (76%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (76%); PUBLIC POLICY (76%); ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (67%); BALLOTS (66%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** TAIPEI, TAIWAN (79%) HENAN, CHINA (57%) UNITED STATES (92%); TAIWAN (79%); CHINA (57%)

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**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

February 14, 2012 Tuesday

## **Train, bus ridership surges to new high; Average daily trips up by 7.9% in seventh consecutive year of growth**

**BYLINE:** Christopher Tan, Senior Correspondent

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 665 words

RIDERSHIP on buses and trains hit a new high last year, making for the seventh consecutive year of growth.

Figures from the Land Transport Authority (LTA) indicate that train ridership rose 10.9 per cent to 2.406 million trips per day, and bus ridership by 5.8 per cent to 3.385 million a day.

In total, the average number of daily public transport trips went up 7.9 per cent to 5.791 million.

A few factors have been cited as being behind this trend - a growing population, stricter car controls and an expanded rail network.

Singapore's total population grew 2.1 per cent to 5.18 million last year.

Social commentator Leong Sze Hian noted, however, that it was the growth in foreign worker numbers that drove the public transport ridership up.

He said: 'When these workers come here, you'd expect them to rely on public transport.'

Prime Minister **Lee** Hsien Loong disclosed recently that about 150,000 foreign workers have come here each year in the last five years.

A tighter rein on the car population and the rising cost of owning a car - including higher expense on fuel, insurance and Electronic Road Pricing rates - have been cited as another factor pushing up the use of trains and buses.

In the last three years alone, average car prices have more than doubled on the back of soaring premiums for certificates of entitlement (COEs).

With the Government allowing the number of vehicles to grow by just 1.5 per cent instead of 3 per cent, COE supply has shrunk, sending their prices up.

Motorists are driving less too. The LTA said that the average annual mileage clocked by cars here fell from more than 21,000km to 19,000km last year - a 10 per cent drop.

However, transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** of the National University of Singapore sees these as 'exogenous factors'.

He believes that the completion of the Circle Line and the improvements made to bus services are the

Train, bus ridership surges to new high; Average daily trips up by 7.9% in seventh consecutive year of growth The Straits Times (Singapore) February 14, 2012 Tuesday

reasons for the spike in public transport ridership. 'By having an improved system, commuters feel that public transport is an option worth considering,' he said.

Indeed, daily ridership on the Circle Line shot up more than 60 per cent to about 300,000 just a month after the entire line became fully open on Oct 8.

Operator SMRT expects the figure to reach 400,000 'within the year'.

The fast-track growth of bus and train ridership is good news to policymakers and planners, who have targeted public transport to provide 70 per cent of the up to 10 million commuting trips by 2020.

The figure is at about 60 per cent now.

But commuters are not exactly elated because, for them, the figures point to more jam-packed trains and buses.

Freelance writer Richard Seah, 56, said: 'It's very serious. The Circle Line, which is almost brand new, is already crowded. What will happen in 10 to 20 years?'

'Commuters have been complaining about crowded trains for over three years now. They should've addressed the issue instead of citing statistics to show that the trains were not crowded.'

Mr Cedric Foo, who heads the Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport, also called for more to be done to address overcrowding: 'More commuters taking to public transport is a good sign for our land-scarce island. However, in the near term, we need to work on speeding up the delivery of new trains, the signalling system upgrade, parallel bus runs and also demand management.'

Transport analyst John Rachmat of the Royal Bank of Scotland Asia Securities pointed out that rising ridership is not necessarily a positive development for operators SMRT and SBS Transit.

'The extra trains and buses that they have to run would bring significantly greater cost increases than the fare increases,' he said.

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## **TACKLING OVERCROWDING**

'We need to work on speeding up the delivery of new trains, the signalling system upgrade, parallel bus runs and also demand management.'

**Mr Cedric Foo, who heads the Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport**

**SUBJECT:** MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (92%); POPULATION GROWTH (90%); TRAINS (90%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (89%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (89%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (78%); POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS (77%); PRICE INCREASES (77%); PRICE CHANGES (77%); FREELANCE EMPLOYMENT (74%); PUBLIC POLICY (72%); PRIME MINISTERS (67%); HEADS OF STATE & GOVERNMENT (67%)

**PERSON:** LEE HSIEN LOONG (54%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (93%)

**LOAD-DATE:** February 13, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** -- ST PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

Train, bus ridership surges to new high; Average daily trips up by 7.9% in seventh consecutive year of growth The Straits Times (Singapore) February 14, 2012 Tuesday

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

May 31, 2013 Friday

## **No Terminal 4 link on Eastern Region Line; Despite LTA clarification, observers see need for direct rail service to and from airport**

**BYLINE:** Royston Sim

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 497 words

THE Land Transport Authority (LTA) clarified yesterday the Eastern Region Line (ERL), which is still under study, will not provide an MRT link to the planned Changi Airport Terminal 4 (T4).

Instead, a spokesman for the authority said, the ERL is "meant to serve developments in Changi, including future airport developments". She did not elaborate, reiterating that plans have not been finalised.

LTA director of rail services Melvyn Thong had said during a railway conference on Wednesday that there were plans to extend the ERL to T4.

Despite LTA ruling out the link to the upcoming T4, observers believe a second MRT link to Changi Airport, if found feasible, could be sited at Terminal 5 (T5), which will be ready some time in the next decade.

T5 will be located on a 1,080ha plot of reclaimed land separated from the airport by Changi Coast Road.

National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** said a direct and more convenient rail service to and from Changi is needed to further assure its position as a leading airport in the world.

Currently, commuters taking the MRT to the airport have to board a shuttle train at Tanah Merah on the East-West Line.

Dr **Lee** noted that two of Changi's major competitors, Hong Kong and Incheon, have direct train services to the city. "Since we have more and more passengers arriving, we cannot have the mentality of just getting them to take the taxi," he said.

There is also a growing trend of backpack travellers who are sensitive to travel cost and more public transport options should be made available to them, he added.

Dr **Lee** said one issue that should be carefully considered is how to connect a future MRT station in Changi to various terminals. One option is for the airport to have a transport centre with bus services to the terminals.

A circular skytrain service to all terminals that does not require transfers should also be studied, he said, noting that the Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport provides such an option.

Dr Park Byung Joon, head of the urban transport management programme at SIM University, said "it is not a bad idea" to have another MRT line serving the airport as travel demand expands.

No Terminal 4 link on Eastern Region Line; Despite LTA clarification, observers see need for direct rail service to and from airport The Straits Times (Singapore) May 31, 2013 Friday

A limitation of the current MRT link on the East-West Line is that passengers riding the trains during peak hours have to join a huge crowd. This is inconvenient for travellers, he said.

Some travellers have griped about the additional time involved in transferring from the East-West Line to the Changi Airport extension at Tanah Merah. Student Nicholas Wong, 21, said: "The transfer from Tanah Merah to the airport is bothersome because the time interval between the trains can go up to six or seven minutes."

Meanwhile, former MP Teo Chong Tee, who pushed for the MRT extension from Tanah Merah to Changi Airport, would like to see the ERL extended to the airport cargo complex and engineering areas, where there are thousands of workers.

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Additional reporting by Chan Huan Jun

**SUBJECT:** AIRPORTS (91%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (90%); TRAINS (89%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (89%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (87%); CIVIL AVIATION (73%); LAND RECLAMATION (73%); TRENDS (64%); MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (64%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SHANGHAI, CHINA (70%); INCHON, KOREA, REPUBLIC OF (58%) SINGAPORE (92%); CHINA (70%); HONG KONG (54%)

**LOAD-DATE:** May 30, 2013

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

September 30, 2013 Monday

## **New transport demand model**

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 198 words

THE National University of Singapore (NUS) wants to evaluate its internal shuttle bus service.

It has called for quotations to develop a transport demand model of the bus network that can be used to analyse and determine the desired system, as well as the optimal service schedule and bus type for operations.

The model will be based on demand and supply during term time, and allow analysis and comparison of different scenarios.

It should be able to factor in bus bunching, overcrowding of individual services and how different bus types affect how long a bus remains at a bus stop.

It also has to consider road, public transport, pedestrian and cycling networks around campus.

Further, the contractor is expected to run surveys to assess, for instance, arrival rates at key bus stops at peak hours during term time. Also to be assessed is the acceptance of electric bicycles as an alternate mode of campus transport.

Transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** said the model would help NUS to understand the demand for bus services, improve the existing system or devise a new one.

It would also complement plans to study an alternative transport system for the campus, Dr **Lee** said.

ROYSTON SIM

**SUBJECT:** MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (90%); SHUTTLE BUS & VANPOOL SERVICES (78%);  
ELECTRIC VEHICLES (73%); CYCLING (68%)

**LOAD-DATE:** September 29, 2013

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

12 of 190 DOCUMENTS

Singapore Government News

December 12, 2012 Wednesday 6:30 AM EST

## Transport operators should look for alternatives to increase bus drivers' salaries

**LENGTH:** 209 words

Singapore: Transport operators should look at other alternatives for increasing the salaries of bus drivers and increasing bus fare should be the last option, Channel NewAsia reported citing industry observers.

The statements were made in reference to Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew's suggestion of raising bus fares for improving the wages of bus drivers in the city-state.

According to industry observers, travelers should not bear the burden because both transport operators, SMRT and Singapore Bus Services Ltd, are running in profit.

National University of Singapore associate professor at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering **Lee Der-Horng** said that the bus operators should enhance their operations and try to reduce their operating costs and not transfer the burden on commuters.

Member of Government Parliamentary Committee (GPC) for transport Gan Thiam Poh also expressed his disagreement towards increasing bus fares and said that operators should try to explore other revenue generation means such as advertisements and rentals.

Analysts have also suggested the operators to look beyond Malaysia and China while hiring bus drivers for avoiding over-dependency on a particular nation or a region, added **Lee**.

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**SUBJECT:** MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (90%); WAGES & SALARIES (90%); INDUSTRY ANALYSTS (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (78%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (73%); ENGINEERING (69%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (54%)

**COMPANY:** COMFORTDELGRO CORP LTD (57%)

**TICKER:** C52 (SGX) (57%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS485310 TAXI SERVICE (57%); NAICS485210 INTERURBAN & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (57%); SIC4131 INTERCITY & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (57%); SIC4121 TAXICABS (57%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** MALAYSIA (79%)

**LOAD-DATE:** December 12, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

Transport operators should look for alternatives to increase bus drivers' salaries Singapore Government  
News December 12, 2012 Wednesday 6:30 AM EST

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Web Publication

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

December 19, 2011 Monday

## Analysts question if maintenance regimes were followed properly

**BYLINE:** Royston Sim

**SECTION:** PRIME NEWS

**LENGTH:** 575 words

YESTERDAY'S finding that dislodged 'claws' could have led to two major disruptions threw up more questions about SMRT's maintenance regime.

Even as LTA officials revealed the results of their checks overnight, transport experts questioned if SMRT had been diligent with maintenance checks and if it had been distracted by the running of the new Circle Line.

At a media briefing yesterday, the Land Transport Authority (LTA) revealed that it had found 21 dislodged claws along the North-South and East-West lines. These brackets support the third rail providing power to trains.

National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** said: 'This kind of thing cannot happen overnight. It takes time to develop. It is most likely that a maintenance issue contributed to this. Whether this is an oversight is something SMRT or the Committee (of Inquiry) will have to find out.'

Maintenance reports for areas with damaged tracks will definitely be retrieved and reviewed, he said.

It is also possible that SMRT had been distracted by the Circle Line, which opened progressively in stages since 2009, said Prof **Lee**.

'They are a private operator, and they will be very sensitive to cost issues,' he said. 'But safety and service delivery cannot be compromised. I think it is necessary for the Government to work with local operators to devise a more stringent maintenance routine.'

According to SMRT, maintenance staff inspect the train tracks daily to pick up defects. Each patrolman can cover a span of about 6km at one time. The SMRT is responsible for about 126km of the MRT network.

In its financial year 2010, it spent \$79.2 million on repairs and maintenance, up from \$66.3 million in 2009. Its repairs and maintenance costs have gone up every year from 2006, when it spent \$57.7 million.

Experts say such costs have gone up because of more wear and tear with an older line and the provision of the new Circle Line. But last week's disruptions will prompt questions on whether it is spending enough on this front.

Prof **Lee** also felt the Government should step in to provide an additional level of checks on how operators SMRT and SBS Transit conduct their inspections and maintenance.

Transport consultant Tham Chen Munn questioned if SMRT conducted a corresponding maintenance review when it decided several months ago to increase the number and frequency of trains during peak

Analysts question if maintenance regimes were followed properly The Straits Times (Singapore) December 19, 2011 Monday

hours.

'When was the last review on the maintenance checklist done? Obviously, with the increase in demand for public transport, there is a need to step up checks on trains and infrastructure,' he said.

SMRT currently conducts maintenance daily during a small window of about 3 1/2 hours between 1am and 4.30am.

If train operators lack sufficient time to complete routine checks on a daily basis, they could consider 'planned disruptions', which are implemented in cities such as London, said Mr Tham.

Citing yesterday's temporary service delay as an example of a planned disruption, he said these longer breaks would help ensure trains and systems are in tip-top condition.

To minimise impact on the overall transport system, the operators would also have to replace the disrupted service with alternative bus services and proper signs, as well as roll out necessary contingency and communication plans, he said.

'This is essential as Singapore moves towards a more efficient and service-oriented transport system,' he said.

**SUBJECT:** MAINTENANCE & REPAIR (89%); TRAINS (89%); INSPECTIONS (78%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (77%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (75%)

**LOAD-DATE:** December 18, 2011

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

January 3, 2013 Thursday

## Cab firms gear up to meet new criteria

**BYLINE:** royston sim

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 534 words

SOME taxi operators have issued reminders to their drivers to heed new government rules on making more cabs available on the road.

These standards by the Land Transport Authority (LTA) took effect on Tuesday, and require cab companies to put out at least 70 per cent of their fleet during peak hours. Taxis must also clock a minimum daily mileage.

LTA will assess the taxi companies every six months, but a number of the firms say they already meet these new targets.

Premier Taxi's general manager Geraldine Liou said reminders have been sent out to cabbies, though she noted that, based on historical figures, her firm, with a fleet of 2,200, has already met the LTA's standards for this year.

Mr Eric Ang, general manager of Prime Taxi, which has 800 taxis, said his firm has done likewise. The company will monitor whether its drivers meet the standards each month.

Bigger companies like SMRT and ComfortDelGro, which have 19,700 taxis between them, say they already hit the targets based on last year's numbers.

The second-largest company, TransCab, and smallest operator Smart could not be reached for comment yesterday.

While the LTA says it believes commuters will find it easier to get cabs now with these requirements, some have questioned if the bar is set too low.

National University of Singapore transport expert **Lee Der Horng** said: "For the first year, the standards wouldn't change the availability of taxis much... I don't think the consumer should expect any drastic changes."

Professor **Lee** added that the main problem is an unequal distribution of taxis, which may not be addressed by the new standards.

The standards were mooted amid growing complaints from commuters about being unable to get a cab, particularly during peak hours. But these standards will become increasingly stringent every year over the next three years.

The LTA has not decided if it will levy financial penalties on those firms that fail.

Cab firms gear up to meet new criteria The Straits Times (Singapore) January 3, 2013 Thursday

Government Parliamentary Committee of Transport deputy chairman Seng Han Thong said meeting the standards will be "no issue" for bigger taxi firms, but smaller operators will need to enhance their capability to do so.

LTA says 80 per cent of the 28,200 taxis here clock a daily average mileage of 250km. For all fleets to meet the first year's 70 per cent target, 900 taxis will need to be on the road more.

Yet for some cabbies on a single shift, adjusting their driving habits to meet the requirements will not be easy.

Mr Randy Tan, 54, who usually works from 9.30am to midnight and clocks more than 250km on most days, will not be adjusting his schedule.

"I don't like being caught in morning traffic jams," he said.

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Drive to ensure more cabs available

- o From Jan 1, each taxi firm must ensure at least 70 per cent of its fleet are on the road during the peak hours of 7am to 11am and 5pm to 11pm.
- o Around the peak hours, from 6am to 7am and 11pm to midnight, 65 per cent of each operator's fleet must be on the road.
- o In addition, operators must also ensure that 70 per cent of their fleets cover a daily average of 250km per cab.
- o All these targets will go up next year and again in 2015. Operators must meet these requirements to expand their fleets.

**SUBJECT:** TAXICABS & LIMOUSINES (93%); FINES & PENALTIES (78%); VEHICLE TRAFFIC (78%); DRIVER BEHAVIOR (73%); HISTORY (69%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (65%)

**COMPANY:** COMFORTDELGRO CORP LTD (56%)

**TICKER:** C52 (SGX) (56%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS485310 TAXI SERVICE (56%); NAICS485210 INTERURBAN & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (56%); SIC4131 INTERCITY & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (56%); SIC4121 TAXICABS (56%)

**LOAD-DATE:** January 2, 2013

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

September 11, 2013 Wednesday

## A surcharge on multiple-car owners won't work: Experts

**BYLINE:** Royston Sim

**SECTION:** TOP OF THE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 419 words

LEVYING a surcharge on owners of several vehicles would not only be hard to implement but it also probably would not make it easier for people who need a car to get one, said observers yesterday.

National University of Singapore (NUS) transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** noted that only about 7 per cent of motorists have more than one car.

He added that a surcharge was unlikely to affect the rich - "at the end, it would really hit the middle-income, those who have two cars for family purposes".

An online survey conducted by the Land Transport Authority (LTA) found that over 70 per cent of respondents wanted a surcharge on those who own more than one car.

But the measure was ruled out when it announced changes to the certificate of entitlement (COE) system on Monday. It said it was concerned over how effective such a levy would be and how it might impact larger households.

The LTA also noted that the tiered Additional Registration Fee and higher road taxes for premium car buyers already addressed social equity in car ownership.

Law professor and Nominated MP Eugene Tan said it was unclear that a surcharge would "contribute significantly to more reasonable COE prices".

A surcharge with loopholes could raise public anger when people see others getting around it, he said. Still, those who feel owners of multiple cars should pay more will be disappointed. "There will still be a sense of unfairness."

Dr **Lee** felt that the social equity issue could be addressed by allocating more COEs to Category A when the new criteria for mass-market cars kick in next year.

Transport economist Michael Li from the Nanyang Business School said academics had struggled to find good reasons to impose a surcharge during focus-group discussions on the issue.

He said the second and subsequent cars are typically used by family members during off-peak periods and so do not contribute much to congestion.

"A levy would create additional social cost... there's administrative and enforcement costs. And people can find ways to bypass these restrictions," added Dr Li.

NUS sociologist Tan Ern Ser said a multiple-ownership surcharge "sounds good, but only on paper". It can

A surcharge on multiple-car owners won't work: Experts The Straits Times (Singapore) September 11, 2013  
Wednesday

be easily circumvented, he noted.

One way to address the issue of car ownership is to enhance public transport, making it convenient and inexpensive to travel without a car.

"We should think of better ways to reduce heavy vehicle traffic on roads and human traffic on buses, and make using public transport a breeze," he added.

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**SUBJECT:** PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (87%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (86%); VEHICLE TRAFFIC (78%); POLLS & SURVEYS (77%); SOCIOLOGY (77%); FAMILY (75%); NEWS BRIEFS (74%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (72%); BUSINESS EDUCATION (72%); FOCUS GROUPS (72%); MIDDLE INCOME PERSONS (70%); TAXES & TAXATION (69%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** HENAN, CHINA (58%) CHINA (58%)

**LOAD-DATE:** September 10, 2013

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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Channel NewsAsia

July 12, 2013 Friday 2:09 PM GMT

## Small taxi operators should consider integrating operations: analysts

**BYLINE:** Zhao Quan Yin

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 298 words

SINGAPORE: Transport analysts have suggested that small to medium-sized taxi operators consider integrating operations, especially on call-booking. This comes after news that Smart Cab will not have its operator licence renewed, as it failed to meet Land Transport Authority's (LTA's) requirements. For example, the company did not meet the minimum rate for successfully matching call bookings with taxis.

Assoc Prof **Lee Der Horng**, transport researcher at the National University of Singapore, said: "The call booking requires fairly extensive financial resources. On the other hand, even if you have that kind of financial resources to set up your call-booking centre, if your fleet size is not (big) enough, then (it's still likely) that your call booking matching rate cannot satisfy the government's regulation. So if the different companies can coordinate with each other in terms of the financial resources, and also in terms of their fleet availability, then I think -- either to the operators themselves or to the passengers -- it's good news." Meanwhile another company -- Prime Taxi -- which has a fleet of 907 cabs, said it plans to buy over Smart Cab's operations and hire more drivers. As rental rates of its hybrid vehicles are fairly low, Prime Taxi said it is confident of the move. However, it added that it feels constrained by the government's requirement of a two per cent annual growth rate for taxi fleets -- by the end of the year. Neo Chee Yong, deputy general manager of Prime Taxi, said: "Looking at the market situation, our population and our tourist arrivals are expected to increase. So this two per cent will not be sufficient. We hope that the government will give us, taxi operators, a bigger space to expand our fleets to cater to this increasing demand."

**SUBJECT:** TAXICABS & LIMOUSINES (78%); TRAVEL INDUSTRY SECTOR PERFORMANCE (76%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (71%); AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY (50%)

**LOAD-DATE:** July 12, 2013

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**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

August 22, 2013 Thursday

## Transport corridors, lifting of height limits after airbase moves

**BYLINE:** Melissa Tan

**SECTION:** TOP OF THE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 594 words

NEW transport corridors and the relaxing of height restrictions for at least six housing estates in the north-east and east are in store after the air force moves out of Paya Lebar, the Ministry of National Development (MND) said yesterday.

The relocation of the Paya Lebar Airbase, expected to happen after 2030, will free up 800ha of land for redevelopment.

"The large size of the site and its fairly central location give rise to many exciting possibilities for new developments to enhance the living environment in the eastern part of Singapore," MND said in an e-mailed statement in response to media queries.

There was "potential to introduce new transport corridors across the land", it added, and height restrictions could be lifted in several towns currently affected by flight paths.

These towns include Toa Payoh, Hougang, Sengkang, Punggol, Bedok and Tampines.

MND also told The Straits Times that existing height restrictions for buildings affected by flight paths range from between one and two storeys for industrial buildings in Kaki Bukit Industrial Estate, to between 16 and 17 storeys for housing developments in Punggol.

Transport experts said yesterday that an MRT line, as well as major roads and expressways, could be built through the 800ha of land freed up by the relocation.

National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** said that a Cross Island MRT Line proposed by the Government in January would previously have had to go around the airbase rather than through or under it due to security reasons.

"But now that the airbase will be relocated, there's no need to compromise (on the line's route). It could also be built cheaper and faster," Professor **Lee** said.

Slated to be ready by 2030, the planned 50km Cross Island Line will run from Jurong to Tampines.

Nanyang Technological University adjunct associate professor Gopinath Menon, a retired Land Transport Authority planner, noted that parts of the Kallang-Paya Lebar Expressway (KPE) had to be built underground because of the airbase.

"The KPE could be moved to the surface level," he said, adding that any new township built on the vacated land would require surface-level access roads. That township could also get its own MRT station.

Transport corridors, lifting of height limits after airbase moves The Straits Times (Singapore) August 22, 2013  
Thursday

Knight Frank research head Alice Tan said future developments in the area would complement the growth of the proposed North Coast Innovation Corridor, a commercial belt stretching from Woodlands and Sembawang to the future Seletar Regional Centre and Punggol.

However, CBRE Research associate director Desmond Sim said that the impact of the relocation on property prices in surrounding areas "would depend on how state planners react". He expects the Urban Redevelopment Authority to release Singapore's Master Plan 2013 - a statutory plan on land use - by early next year.

Paya Lebar Airbase is surrounded by low-density developments such as industrial estates, but consultants said that the land use for those areas could eventually be intensified or changed.

As for the towns such as Bedok and Tampines that could have height restrictions relaxed, Mr Sim said the future en bloc potential could result in property prices appreciating 10 per cent to 20 per cent.

However, he cautioned against any "knee-jerk" price rise, saying the airbase relocation was many years down the road.

MND said yesterday that the relocation was "a large-scale endeavour and will take time to realise". It added: "The specific new development plans for Paya Lebar Airbase and the surrounding area will be shaped over time."

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**SUBJECT:** RELOCATIONS (89%); INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY (89%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (87%); LAND USE PLANNING (78%); URBAN DEVELOPMENT (77%); ECONOMIC NEWS (77%); AIR FORCES (77%); REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT (77%); NEWS BRIEFS (74%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (71%)

**COMPANY:** KNIGHT FRANK LLP (51%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS531190 LESSORS OF OTHER REAL ESTATE PROPERTY (51%); SIC6519 LESSORS OF REAL PROPERTY, NEC (51%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** HENAN, CHINA (56%) SINGAPORE (93%); CHINA (56%)

**LOAD-DATE:** August 21, 2013

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

18 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

November 12, 2012 Monday

## **Don't rely too much on usage charges to curb vehicle population**

**SECTION:** FORUM LETTERS; Online Story

**LENGTH:** 112 words

IN LAST Thursday's article ("One million vehicles on the road"), transport researcher **Lee Der-Hornng** said: "If we can move towards the so-called 'usage-based' charging system, then it may not be necessary to tighten so much on ownership."

It may be fallacious to suggest that upon owning a vehicle, one would be dissuaded from using it solely because of higher usage charges.

Usage charges may be effective only as a second layer to reduce the vehicle population, provided car ownership is not as easy as it is now, with low monthly instalment payments.

The authorities should take concrete steps to reduce vehicle ownership and not over-rely on usage charges.

M. Lukshumayeh

**SUBJECT:** LETTERS & COMMENTS (93%); MOTOR VEHICLES (88%)

**LOAD-DATE:** November 11, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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19 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

October 1, 2012 Monday

## **Don't let money call the shots in getting a cab**

**SECTION:** FORUM LETTERS; Online Story

**LENGTH:** 79 words

GOVERNMENT Parliamentary Committee for Transport vice-chairman Seng Han Thong and transport expert **Lee Der Horng** appear to be advocating a free market system for taxis ("No taxis? Some offer extra cash to get a ride"; last Friday).

That is tantamount to agreeing that it is all right to let a commuter at the back of a taxi queue flash a \$50 note to get to the front and into a taxi.

What if there are others, including seniors and unwell commuters, who are in front'

Jack Chew

**SUBJECT:** LETTERS & COMMENTS (93%)

**LOAD-DATE:** September 30, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

October 1, 2012 Monday

**Extra cash? Call a limousine service, not a cab****SECTION:** FORUM LETTERS; Online Story**LENGTH:** 203 words

THE report ("No taxis? Some offer extra cash to get a ride"; last Friday) worries me. Taxi drivers who participate in such schemes are opportunists who have no regard for service excellence and the responsibilities accorded to them when granted licences by the authorities.

Of greater concern were the responses of National Taxi Association president Wee Boon Kim and National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng**, which seem to imply that there is nothing wrong with the practice of offering extra cash to get a cab.

Taxis are a public transport service. The drivers are licensed and must provide the service to the public fairly and responsibly. In return, concessions are given to taxi operators by the authorities.

If this practice of providing services only to the highest bidder is allowed, one might as well allow taxis without meters and cabbies to choose whom to provide their services to.

If a commuter wishes to pay a premium to get ahead of the queue, he should call a private limousine service.

Allowing an illegal booking service will signal the beginning of the end of our excellent taxi service, which is the envy of many other nations for being fair, honest and reliable.

Ng Kei Yong

**SUBJECT:** TAXICABS & LIMOUSINES (96%); LETTERS & COMMENTS (93%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (74%)**LOAD-DATE:** September 30, 2012**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** NewspaperCopyright 2012 Singapore Press Holdings Limited  
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The Straits Times (Singapore)

August 3, 2011 Wednesday

## More bus links to Circle Line soon

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE**LENGTH:** 285 words

BUS services that ferry commuters to Circle Line stations will be improved when the final 12 stations open on Oct 8.

A Land Transport Authority (LTA) spokesman yesterday noted that commuters' travel patterns would change once the 28-station Circle Line is fully operational.

The LTA will work with public transport operators to enhance bus connectivity to the Circle Line, she said in response to queries from The Straits Times.

Where necessary, bus frequencies will be adjusted to meet the increased demand from commuters travelling to take the Circle Line trains, she added.

The LTA will closely monitor any changes in bus ridership that come about from the opening of the 12 stations running from Marymount to HarbourFront, and review existing bus routes where necessary.

When fully open, the Circle Line is expected to ease crowding on the North-South and East-West lines by 10 per cent to 15 per cent by allowing commuters to bypass the busy interchanges of City Hall and Raffles Place.

National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** said the completed Circle Line would significantly enhance network connectivity.

'Before the Circle Line was in place, our MRT system was not really a network - there was a lack of horizontal connections between MRT lines,' he said.

From Oct 8, there will be six interchanges on the Circle Line - at HarbourFront, Buona Vista, Bishan, Serangoon, Paya Lebar and Dhoby Ghaut - for commuters to transfer to the North-South, East-West and North-East lines.

Prof **Lee** does not expect bus planners to scale down bus services when the new stations are open, unless there is 'serious overlapping between buses and MRT routes'.

**ROYSTON SIM****SUBJECT:** URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (91%); MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (90%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (79%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (67%); COMPUTER NETWORKS (66%)**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE (92%) SINGAPORE (92%)**LOAD-DATE:** August 2, 2011

More bus links to Circle Line soon The Straits Times (Singapore) August 3, 2011 Wednesday

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Singapore Government News

December 27, 2011 Tuesday 6:30 AM EST

## Analysts Favor Innovative Ideas over Mechanized Carparks to Tackle Parking Space Shortage

**LENGTH:** 228 words

Singapore: With infrastructure development authorities here mulling at establishing mechanized carparks, some analysts believe that such a system would be fraught with challenges, especially in terms of maintenance and costs. They rather feel more innovative ideas would resolve the problem of housing the country's huge population of cars, such as developing a private market for parking spaces and reserving separate spaces for vehicles of different sizes.

Grouping cars of similar sizes together is a "very common" trend in some U.S. cities, noted National University of Singapore transport expert **Lee Der Horng**. "So the smaller cars are parked in the same zone, and it's the same for the sports utility vehicles (SUVs), for instance," he said. Meanwhile, transport economist Michael Li with Nanyang Technological University suggested that each household should be allotted a car park lot while those without vehicles should be allowed to "rent" out their spaces to others, which would facilitate a market for ensuring a balanced demand and supply equation.

The Ministry of National Development has noted that six out of 10 Housing and Development Board (HDB) households do not own cars. And only a third or so own a car, while 5% own two or more. In the days ahead, the cheap HDB parking fees is set to exacerbate Singapore's carpark scarcity, analysts have warned.

**SUBJECT:** PARKING SPACES & FACILITIES (96%); SPORT UTILITY VEHICLES (90%); TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE (90%); INFRASTRUCTURE (88%); TRENDS (78%); MOTOR VEHICLES (76%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** HENAN, CHINA (55%) SINGAPORE (94%); CHINA (55%)

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

May 27, 2011 Friday

## Time for a robust review of ERP

**LENGTH:** 218 words

I READ with great concern the report on the advent of a new ERP system based on satellite tracking technology, especially the part where transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** says it will allow Electronic Road Pricing to be implemented 'much more aggressively' ('Trial run soon for new ERP system'; Wednesday).

The current ERP system is clearly not working to ease the congestion on our roads. Yet, more ERP gantries are being erected around Singapore - some are even in heartland neighbourhoods (for example, in Toa Payoh Lorong 6).

We have ended up paying more to use our roads, and yet we are unable to enjoy a smooth ride. A more robust review of the current system, in consultation with those who use the roads every day, is clearly needed.

Initiatives like the new satellite-tracking system would affect the everyday life of all Singaporeans. One might argue that this could be the solution to ease the congestion on our roads. But the investments on the new technology do not come cheap.

How will this new technology impact on the lives of those whose jobs require them to be on the road most of the time?

What about privacy issues? Does it mean I will be 'tracked' everywhere I go in Singapore?

We should explore whether there are other cheaper and yet more efficient ways to solve our traffic woes.

Tin Chee Yee

**SUBJECT:** BACK OFFICE OPERATIONS (91%); SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY (74%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (90%)

**LOAD-DATE:** May 26, 2011

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

24 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

December 22, 2012 Saturday

## 'Change bus design to change behaviour'; Experts say passengers will move to the rear if it has more standing room

**BYLINE:** jermyn chow and priscilla goy

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 508 words

CHANGING bus designs to create extra standing room may be more effective than campaigns urging passengers to move to the back of the vehicle, experts claim.

Transport analysts said that by fixing design flaws in the current fleets, passengers will be more willing to move further inside and make room for others.

It comes after the Land Transport Authority (LTA) said that it would put stickers in 550 buses over the next five years to tackle ungracious behaviour.

Dr **Lee Der Horng**, a transport researcher at the National University of Singapore, said passengers tend to want to stay near the exits, especially during peak hours.

Experts also suggested moving the exit door to the rear, putting all seats at the front so the back only has standing room and using foldable seats to free up space.

Transport economist Michael Li, of Nanyang Business School, estimated that by making some of the changes, the average journey can be cut by at least 15 minutes.

Passengers told The Straits Times they are not willing to move to the back due to the narrow aisles and uncomfortable sloping floor. Most bus users said they usually move to the centre where there is more standing room.

"The problem is not with commuters but with the bus design... there's not much space at the back and it's also inconvenient for those seated at the back to come out," said human resources executive Joanne Soh, 42.

Madam Joyce Chia, 51, said that even though she is willing, "I have to squeeze through... They roll their eyes and do not budge."

Bus operators SMRT and SBS Transit say their newer buses, with low floors, are catered to the elderly and wheelchair-bound.

But one drawback is that the engine is located at the back, which raises the floorboard at the rear. Also, said SBS Transit spokesman Tammy Tan, exit doors cannot be placed at the back as steps would then be required, which would present a problem for the growing number of elderly passengers.

'Change bus design to change behaviour'; Experts say passengers will move to the rear if it has more standing room The Straits Times (Singapore) December 22, 2012 Saturday

Ms Tan said standing capacity in its buses is up from about 40 to 55, while single-decker buses added to the fleet last year are low-floor with no steps in the aisle.

SMRT also said standing room in its buses has increased, with its latest vehicles taking 52 standing passengers and 38 seated.

The LTA began its sticker trial last Sunday, with four messages on 16 buses on routes 50 and 513. One sticker reads: "You're such a darling! Wiggle in a teensie weensie bit more, OK"

Public Transport Council chairman Gerard Ee said the stickers are a good idea, but operators should consider new bus designs. "Every idea can and should be explored, but there are always trade-offs. Do we create more standing space at the expense of seats for increasingly elderly passengers"

Dr Siok Tambyah, a marketing lecturer at NUS, said: "Campaigns will have to go hand in hand with a design change to send a more effective message."

Said full-time national serviceman David Chen, 20: "Campaigns have their benefits, but they are not as effective as having the bus driver shout out."

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**SUBJECT:** INDUSTRY ANALYSTS (90%); MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (89%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (89%); TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (78%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (76%); BUSINESS EDUCATION (70%); SENIOR CITIZENS (63%)

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

March 10, 2012 Saturday

## 4 reasons you can't get a cab when you need one

**SECTION:** PRIME NEWS

**LENGTH:** 1805 words

Singapore has 27,000 taxis and one of the highest ratios of cabs to people among cities, but commuters still find it hard to get a cab when they need one.

Over the years, the taxi industry has improved its call booking technology, added new players, and raised fares. Yet, complaints about taxi service abound. This week, the Government announced more measures to improve cab services at peak hours. They include stricter call booking standards and plans to get more cabs on the road. But will they do the trick?

**GOH CHIN LIAN** and **ROYSTON SIM** look at the underlying issues.

### FARE STRUCTURE

Cabbies earn more from call bookings

### THE PROBLEM

One of accountant Wilfred Lim's pet peeves is taxi drivers who ply the roads but refuse to stop for passengers, because they are waiting for call bookings.

'It's very frustrating when cabs don't stop at the taxi stand. I have to resort to booking a cab and it isn't always easy to get through,' said Mr Lim, 26.

Commuters have also complained about taxis that disappear before surcharge hours and gather at lucrative locations such as casinos.

### THE REASON

Industry observers said the current fare structure discourages drivers from picking up passengers along the road, particularly in areas such as the Central Business District where demand is always high.

Some cabbies choose to drive around and wait for a booking to come in so they can earn a few dollars more.

Currently, cabbies from operators such as ComfortDelGro and TransCab earn \$3.30 more from a call booking during peak hours.

National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** said it was natural for drivers to try and maximise their earnings through booking fees and surcharges, although this would result in commuters feeling that drivers simply want to hide and wait for call bookings.

As for taxis not stopping to pick up passengers, National Taxi Association president Wee Boon Kim pointed

4 reasons you can't get a cab when you need one The Straits Times (Singapore) March 10, 2012 Saturday

out that traffic rules mandate that taxis cannot stop at certain times or places, such as within 9m of bus stops.

## THE SOLUTION

Associate Professor **Lee** said a simplified fare structure would help address the issue of taxi demand and supply.

If surcharges are done away with and a high flag-down fee implemented instead, there would not be the phenomenon of drivers circling around waiting for bookings, he said. Their earnings would also not be badly affected.

Commuter Ben Liu, 35, who works as a consultant, said prices should be raised to a point where people can get a cab without much difficulty.

But others like technician Muhammad Amran, 27, disagreed. He said: 'It's not worth it to pay extra charges to get a cab.'

## DRIVERS CHANGING SHIFT

Narrow window for handover

## THE PROBLEM

There's a certain time of the day when Madam Allison Ho knows it's no use joining a taxi queue or waiting by the road for a cab.

Like last week when she walked out of the National University Hospital and saw a snaking queue of about 20 people at the taxi stand. It was 4.30pm.

'It's very hard to hail a taxi from around 4pm to 5pm. Cabbies are changing shift,' said Madam Ho, 32, a business development manager who was rushing home to Yishun.

## THE REASON

An estimated 70 per cent of cabs have two drivers a day, each working between 10 and 12 hours and splitting the daily rental charges 50-50.

To ensure that each driver has a chance to earn peak-hour fares - the day driver gets the morning peak while the night driver takes the evening one - they change shift between 4pm and 6pm.

They cannot change over too early, say at 2pm or 3pm, as the day driver would then have to wake up in the wee hours of the morning or lose a few hours of business.

## THE SOLUTION

Regular taxi users like polytechnic lecturer Simon Eng, 39, suggests staggering the timings to change shifts.

Madam Ho wants the taxi companies to coordinate shift change times.

But Transcab general manager Jasmine Tan noted that the suggestions are hard to enforce because taxi drivers are independent operators.

Cities like New York impose a surcharge between 4pm and 8pm to get more drivers to work in the afternoon. The surcharge did not eradicate the problem but was seen to have eased it.

In parts of China, drivers change shifts only after 24 hours. However, this means longer hours behind the

4 reasons you can't get a cab when you need one The Straits Times (Singapore) March 10, 2012 Saturday

wheel, which could be dangerous.

Transcab, the second-largest operator here, is looking into encouraging cabbies to change shift in the Central Business District instead of near their homes, so that they can meet the higher demand downtown.

The night driver could take the MRT to meet the day driver in the CBD, said Ms Tan.

## **UNDER-UTILISATION**

Vehicle available but driver may not be

## **THE PROBLEM**

Once a week, finance manager Alina Walton tries to get a cab from a taxi stand in Raffles Place at around 6pm to 7pm, but she has to wait 15 minutes for one.

She had been queuing for five minutes when The Straits Times met her on Thursday, and was resigned to a longer wait.

'There aren't enough taxis,' said Ms Walton, 26, a Russian national.

Polytechnic lecturer Simon Eng, 39, typically waits 15minutes near his Bishan home before he manages to flag a cab to get to church on Sunday mornings.

'It's always congested during peak hours,' he said. 'What puzzles me are Sunday mornings. It's not rush hour, it's not a weekday, yet it's so hard to get a cab.'

## **THE REASON**

Singapore's 27,000-strong taxi fleet is not being fully utilised.

As Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew noted in Parliament this week, total taxi mileage has remained about the same although the taxi fleet has grown some 20 per cent since 2006.

One reason for this, said Ang Mo Kio GRC MP Seng Han Thong, is that about 30 per cent of the taxi fleet are single-driver cabs.

'This means the current fleet of taxis we have is under-utilised to serve the commuting needs of the public,' he said.

Mr Seng is an adviser to the National Taxi Association (NTA).

A National University of Singapore study supervised by transport economist Anthony Chin found that most cabbies have a target take-home income.

Once this is achieved, they either take it easy or call it a day - which means their vehicles are taken off the street if they do not have a relief driver.

Veteran cabby Yap Boon Kee, 59, is one such example. He is content to earn about \$1,500 a month and heads home once he hits his daily target. He does not have a relief driver.

An industry observer noted that a minority of drivers also use the taxi as their personal vehicle at times - thus depriving customers of their service.

'At any one time, the only taxis not on the road should be in the workshop,' he said.

## **THE SOLUTION**

4 reasons you can't get a cab when you need one The Straits Times (Singapore) March 10, 2012 Saturday

The Land Transport Authority (LTA) is currently studying regulatory measures to put more taxis on the road, particularly during peak hours. The six-month study will be completed later this year.

The LTA is exploring the feasibility of mandating that each taxi company must have a certain percentage of its fleet on the road at a time, particularly during peak periods.

Other possible ideas include setting a minimum distance that each taxi must clock per day.

NTA president Wee Boon Kim said the association is working with the LTA and its partners on how to help match taxi hirers with reliable relief drivers, and how existing vehicles can be used in full.

Dr Park Byung Joon, programme head of the master of science programme in urban transport management at SIM University, believes making more taxis available could be an effective strategy to meet passenger demand.

## **BOOKING BOTTLENECK**

Calls go through but no taxis in the area

### **THE PROBLEM**

Taxi operators have poured millions of dollars into high-tech call-booking systems, but banking manager Shanti Ramanathan still has trouble booking a cab from 8am to 9am.

She takes a taxi from her home near Farrer Park to work, but at least twice a week faces problems getting one. She gets through to the operator, but no cab is available, Ms Ramanathan, 48, said.

The Straits Times checked out the peak-hour situation yesterday at 9.10am from Punggol Central. We tried to book a cab from six operators and got through each time, but no cabs were available. We finally got a cab at 9.41am, when a CityCab taxi pulled up and a passenger got out.

### **THE REASON**

Taxi operators say demand for cabs spikes dramatically during rush hour and on rainy days.

ComfortDelGro reports that one rainy Friday in September 2010, it secured 97,631 taxi bookings - the highest that year - and 50 per cent more than the daily average.

The problem is not that people cannot get through to the operator: Over the years, more call agents and phone lines have been added. And it is not that operators cannot match cabs to customers: Global positioning system technology is increasingly used to do this.

One reason for not getting a cab through call booking is that drivers are just not in the area.

Cabbies typically take passengers from housing estates to the city centre in the morning, then continue their search for fares in places nearby, like Fort Road, Tanjong Rhu and Tiong Bahru. Few cruise empty to further-away housing estates like Punggol.

Said Transcab general manager Jasmine Tan: 'Drivers won't waste diesel going from downtown to HDB estates. They go to the nearest areas.'

But cabby behaviour can also contribute to customers' inability to book a cab, say operators. They have to be willing to take the booking.

Some, however, are wary, due to customers' desperation tactics. Said National Taxi Association president Wee Boon Kim: 'We have heard of drivers having their call bookings cancelled upon reaching the destination, or passengers making multiple bookings, resulting in several taxis arriving at the same location.'

**THE SOLUTION**

The Government will tighten service standards for taxi call bookings during peak hours from Oct 1.

For instance, of the calls that get through a large taxi company's hotline, at least 92 per cent must be successfully matched with taxis, up from 90 per cent now.

Operators must also ensure shorter waiting times for calls to be answered and for taxis to arrive.

They must equip their fleets so that taxis near a caller can be identified and one of them assigned to him.

But, observers say, these measures do not directly solve the problem of drivers not going to where they are needed.

Transport economist Michael Li, of Nanyang Business School, suggests matching demand and taxi supply with 'real-time' booking fees.

In an interactive bidding system, customers could offer different booking fees on top of the morning peak surcharge to see if cabbies would pick them up. If a person needs a taxi more urgently, he can offer a higher fee. And once the cabby accepts the offer, both sides have to stick to the agreement, he said.

**SUBJECT:** TAXICABS & LIMOUSINES (93%); COMPANY EARNINGS (89%); TRANSPORTATION LAW (74%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (64%)

**COMPANY:** COMFORTDELGRO CORP LTD (54%)

**TICKER:** C52 (SGX) (54%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS485310 TAXI SERVICE (54%); NAICS485210 INTERURBAN & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (54%); SIC4131 INTERCITY & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (54%); SIC4121 TAXICABS (54%)

**LOAD-DATE:** March 9, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** -- ST PHOTO: SEAH KWANG PENG

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

26 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

May 30, 2013 Thursday

## Direct MRT link to Changi Airport planned

**BYLINE:** Royston Sim

**SECTION:** TOP OF THE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 387 words

A SECOND train link to Changi Airport is on the cards. But this one could go straight to the airport.

Speaking at the Modern Railways conference at Mandarin Orchard hotel yesterday, Land Transport Authority director of rail services Melvyn Thong said there are plans to extend the upcoming Eastern Region Line (ERL) and link it to the airport's planned Terminal 4.

He did not give further details.

But The Straits Times understands that if plans for the extension go ahead, the ERL is likely to have a direct link to Terminal 4, which is set to be ready by 2017.

Currently, commuters taking the MRT to the airport have to board a shuttle train at Tanah Merah on the East-West Line.

National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** said a direct link to the airport could make the ERL the preferred alternative to get to Changi from the city.

Chief executive officer of engineering firm KTC Group Rajan Krishnan also applauded the move. The former Land Transport Authority director of projects noted that unlike Hong Kong or Kuala Lumpur, Singapore has no high-speed express train service to the airport. "Having another link improves accessibility," he said.

He explained that the line would provide excess capacity and cater to the rise in passenger traffic at the airport. Travellers could use the ERL and reduce the load on the East-West Line in the future, he added.

The fully underground ERL will start from Marina Bay, where it is linked to the Thomson Line. It will run through residential estates near Singapore's eastern shore, including Marine Parade, Tanjong Rhu, Siglap, Bedok South and Upper East Coast.

First announced in the 2008 Land Transport Masterplan, the ERL is scheduled to be completed by 2020. However, observers say the line is unlikely to be ready by then as the Thomson Line will be fully operational only in 2021.

Mr Thong yesterday also shared details of a new mega-depot that will be built at the eastern end of the ERL. This integrated development, which he said was likely to be the first of its kind in the world, will house a bus depot and train depots for the ERL, East-West Line and Downtown Line.

The development, which is expected to include an elevated depot, one at surface level and one underground, would be able to house 188 trains and 550 buses.

Direct MRT link to Changi Airport planned The Straits Times (Singapore) May 30, 2013 Thursday

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**SUBJECT:** HIGH SPEED TRAINS (90%); TRAINS (89%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (78%); RAIL STATIONS & TERMINALS (78%); EXECUTIVES (77%); BUS STATIONS & TERMINALS (76%); NEWS BRIEFS (74%); MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (70%); ENGINEERING (69%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE (93%) SINGAPORE (93%)

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Channel NewsAsia

April 15, 2012 Sunday 12:50 PM GMT

## Employers need to promote flexi-working hours for SMRT early bird discounts to work

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 272 words

SINGAPORE: A 30 cents fare discount to encourage MRT commuters to travel before the morning rush hour has seen limited impact.

Since SMRT started offering a higher fare discount in October, it found that among passengers who usually travel between 7.45 and 8.15am, 1.2 per cent of them are now going to work earlier, between 7 and 7.45am.

Train fares for these early birds who travel before 7.45am on the North-South and East-West MRT lines as well as the Bukit Panjang LRT are 30 cents cheaper.

But SMRT said this hasn't eased traffic as train ridership grew by six per cent between 7 and 8.15am.

Experts believe the key to the scheme's success lies on employers.

Associate Professor **Lee Der-Hong** from the Department of Civil Engineering at the National University of Singapore said: "Even if I'm willing to wake up early to respond to this kind of incentive, why should I take up all these sacrifices to report early to work if my office is not opened when I arrive at my workplace.

"So, in the more coherent way, it's important for the operators to provide the incentive, which are the things we have been already observing. And on the other hand, there's also the participation from the employers. Are employers really willing to exercise and practise more flexible working hours? In the end, with this interaction together, it would be more likely for us to respond to this system. This kind of scheme will then be more sustainable in the future."

In order to diversify the crowded peak hours, the Transport Ministry will set up an inter-departmental working group, focused on promoting flexible working hours and flexible travel habits.

**SUBJECT:** FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS (90%); FLEXTIME (88%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (78%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (69%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (68%)

**LOAD-DATE:** April 15, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

28 of 190 DOCUMENTS

Channel NewsAsia

May 29, 2012 Tuesday 9:34 PM GMT

## The road ahead for COEs

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 696 words

SINGAPORE: With the Land Transport Authority (LTA) due to complete a review by the end of the month - on the feasibility of increasing the supply of Certificates of Entitlement (COEs) - analysts TODAY spoke to called on the authorities to re-examine the system to address its volatility and to ensure social equity, with one even urging an overhaul.

Most experts and observers felt that by and large, the system has worked. However, tweaks are in order, they said.

Suggestions include temporarily allowing motorists to sell their COE back to LTA at the market price, allocating a certain number of COEs to different income brackets, having a fixed quota of COEs every year and having an additional category for luxury cars.

As COE premiums hit record levels in recent months, members of public have questioned the 22-year-old system.

In a letter published on May 18, TODAY reader Chua Yao Kun argued that the COE system "has proven to be a blunt tool". Apart from contributing to inflation, he argued that the COE system has resulted in vehicle ownership being increasingly concentrated in the hands of the rich, rather than being allocated to activities that promote economic value. The letter has since garnered 1,700 'likes'.

National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** felt the COE system needs an overhaul. "The affordability (of a car) is not equal to the true desire or need to have a vehicle," he said.

One way to address the issue of social equity is to allocate a certain number of COE to different income brackets, said UniSIM School of Business urban transport management expert Park Byung Joon. Nevertheless, such a method is "easier said than done", Dr Park noted.

He added: "Who will evaluate the level of needs of each family and how? We may end up with having a bureaucratic monster, not necessarily better than COE system."

Pasir Ris-Punggol Group Representation Constituency MP Gan Thiam Poh, who is on the Government Parliamentary Committee for transport, concurred: "It will be difficult to assess whose needs are more pressing and it will be difficult to satisfy everybody."

Assoc Prof **Lee** suggested a balloting system. However, he noted that doing so could make the situation worse if it encourages the "entire population" to try their luck. "But then again, such things can be prevented much in the way the HDB has the rule that you can only sell your flat only after five years. If implemented for cars as well, it would ensure car owners know their responsibility and will have to take care of the car for the next five years," he added.

To address the volatility, Assoc Prof **Lee** suggested a more stable COE supply. Having a new category for

luxury cars could also ensure that those who can afford it can pay more, he added.

#### HAS COE SYSTEM WORKED?

Overall, Dr Park believes the system has achieved its objective. "Without the COE system, the Singapore roads would become even more congested," said Dr Park. He pointed out that the current situation is due to the oversupply of COE between 2004 and 2008 - during that period, Singaporeans enjoyed relatively low COEs, he noted.

"The COE price is determined by the market force of supply and demand.. When supply decreases in such a huge number, it is not surprising that COE price drastically increased," he said.

Mountbatten MP Lim Biow Chuan, who is also on the GPC for transport, said the COE system has "worked to a certain extent".

"The question now is how it can be tweaked as people are feeling the pinch and there have been various requests and proposals," said Mr Lim.

Apart from the COE system, some MPs were concerned at the ease with which prospective buyers are able to finance their cars. These days, some banks are even offering on-the-spot approval for car loans.

Mr Lim suggested "cutting financing so that you do not allow people who cannot afford cars to leverage payments they may not be able to finance".

Ang Mo Kio GRC MP Ang Hin Kee cautioned against implementing "stop gap measures" which could throw the Republic's long term plans "into disarray". The entire transport system should be looked at in its totality before any tweaks to the COE system are made, he stressed. -

**SUBJECT:** LUXURY GOODS (89%); MOTOR VEHICLES (74%); BUSINESS EDUCATION (70%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (70%)

**LOAD-DATE:** May 29, 2012

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29 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

July 6, 2012 Friday

## A 'wake-up call' for rail operator

**BYLINE:** Jermyn Chow, Cheryl Ong & Karamjit Kaur

**SECTION:** PRIME NEWS

**LENGTH:** 553 words

SEVERAL Members of Parliament and transport experts said the Committee of Inquiry (COI) report into last December's rail breakdowns should be a wake-up call for SMRT.

Nee Soon GRC MP **Lee** Bee Wah said she was shocked to learn of the rail operator's maintenance lapses.

She added: 'I believe transparency in the handling of the matter will satisfy the public's need for answers.

'But they will be unhappy to think that this is an organisation that pays top dollar for its senior management, who were not paying attention to important details and not able to put public interest at the core of its business.'

Mountbatten MP Lim Biow Chuan, who is on the Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport, said the report was just the start in helping SMRT restore public confidence in its system.

The operator must be given time to prove itself and make sure such breakdowns are not repeated, he added.

In its report, made public on Wednesday, the COI said a series of maintenance lapses had contributed to the breakdowns, which affected more than 220,000 commuters on Dec 15 and Dec 17.

It listed more than 30 recommendations to prevent such breakdowns and to mitigate the impact on commuters.

In response, SMRT said it had operated a 'comprehensive maintenance regime' which placed it among the top performing metro operators in the world.

It has also put in place improvements since December and will do more.

Mr Chen Munn Tham, an independent transport consultant, said that while no system is fail-proof, 'there must be a maintenance regime to ensure that all components and parts are checked regularly according to a schedule or timetable'.

He noted that some of the COI's recommendations were 'common sense', and was surprised they had not been in place.

Dr **Lee Der Horng**, a transport researcher at the National University of Singapore, said the COI report should also nudge SBS Transit - the other operator - to re-look its rail operations.

A 'wake-up call' for rail operator The Straits Times (Singapore) July 6, 2012 Friday

Two commuters who were stranded in the breakdowns said they wished SMRT had shown more contrition over the lapses.

Technology specialist Lai Chin Liang, 41, said he found SMRT's remarks 'defensive'.

'They did not seem willing to take the blame or responsibility for everything that happened,' he said yesterday.

Mr Lai was left stranded at Braddell station on Dec 15 and was one of two commuters who testified at the COI hearing in April.

He had read media reports of the COI's findings, as well as the full report which was posted online on Wednesday evening.

He said he was also surprised when he read in the COI report that SMRT's repair and maintenance costs per train-km had remained fairly constant since 2003 till last year. (See chart above: "MONEY SPENT ON REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE AND UPGRADES")

There was, however, a spike in capital expenditure when it spent money to upgrade its ageing train cabins.

IT support officer Loy Kok Nien, who was among those stranded at Newton station on Dec 15, was also struck by the amount SMRT spent on maintenance.

'How can maintenance costs remain the same when the number of train commuters has increased in the last few years? They should pay more attention to this,' he said.

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**SEE FORUM**

**SUBJECT:** INVESTIGATIONS (90%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (90%); TESTIMONY (78%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (78%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (76%); MAINTENANCE & REPAIR (73%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (71%)

**LOAD-DATE:** July 5, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** Commuter Lai Chin Liang, taking a train yesterday, found SMRT's remarks 'defensive' and questioned its maintenance expenditure. -- ST PHOTO: ASHLEIGH SIM

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

30 of 190 DOCUMENTS

Singapore Government News

December 19, 2011 Monday 6:30 AM EST

## **Inquiry Committee Set Up to Probe into SMRT's Recent Disruption of Trains Services**

**LENGTH:** 219 words

Singapore: The government has initiated a formal inquiry to find out the causes behind the recent disruptions in the train services of local operator SMRT Corp. The Committee of Inquiry should also ascertain whether the existing maintenance system is proper, apart from looking into the technical glitches, according to analysts.

They have maintained that the disruptions and subsequent turmoil are not restricted to technical snags only, but circumstances that put doubts on the competency of contingency plans. Head of Urban Transport Management Dr Park Byung Joon with SIM University said, "It is actually very dangerous for passengers to take action on their own. For example, you are not supposed to jump onto the track just because the train stopped." The operators should first ascertain for themselves as to what should be done before they inform passengers, Joon added.

Meanwhile, Associate Professor **Lee Der Horng** with the Department of Civil Engineering under the National University of Singapore pointed out that the country's ambition of establishing a modernized transportation network will come to nought were such disruptions to continue with the system. Observers have also put the blame for the malfunction to the aging rail line in the affected North-South route as it has been running since 1987.

**SUBJECT:** TRAINS (90%); INVESTIGATIONS (90%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (78%); ENGINEERING (71%); INDUSTRY ANALYSTS (71%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (70%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (70%)

**LOAD-DATE:** December 19, 2011**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Web Publication

31 of 190 DOCUMENTS

Channel NewsAsia

May 28, 2012 Monday 1:38 PM GMT

## LTA to change traffic light timings at Ferrari crash junction

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 575 words

SINGAPORE: The Land Transport Authority (LTA) said it would synchronise the timings of the traffic lights at an area where two accidents happened within a span of just two weeks.

The traffic signals at the junction of Rochor Road and Victoria Street and the pedestrian crossing linking Bugis Junction and Bugis Village will now turn green at about the same time.

LTA said it was implementing the change, based on suggestions from the public, describing it as an "added precautionary measure".

The junction of Rochor Road and Victoria Street was the scene of two accidents that saw three dead and three injured.

The first accident on May 12 involved a speeding Ferrari, while the second one on May 26 involved a Lexus. Both cars crashed into taxis.

Both accidents happened in the wee hours on a Saturday and involved cars travelling in the same direction.

Some suggested that the straight road and the close proximity between the sets of traffic lights at two different stretches - they are about 100m apart - encouraged reckless drivers to speed in the wee hours, to try and pass the consecutive sets of lights before they turn red.

Those Channel NewsAsia spoke with, however, said it may be a problem with the positioning of the traffic lights at the intersection, which may be confusing to drivers.

Along Victoria Street, the junctions just before and after the intersection with Rochor Road have overhead traffic lights. Only the intersection where the accidents took place does not have overhead traffic lights.

"Many drivers think the traffic light is still far away, and don't realise there's actually an intersection there," said taxi driver Albert Ho.

Dr **Lee Der-Horng**, associate professor of civil engineering at the National University of Singapore, said the timing of the traffic signals might have been a factor in the accidents.

"One possibility is that at the pedestrian crossing, maybe, the driver tried to beat the yellow signal. So after he travelled the 50, 60 metres, when he reached the major intersection, the traffic signal already turned to red," he said. "So it becomes a case where he beat the red light; therefore, the accident happened."

Dr **Lee** said that besides the traffic signal timings, overhead traffic lights would give drivers a better view of the signal.

"This intersection is actually satisfactory, from the safety's point of view, from the sight distance," he said.

LTA to change traffic light timings at Ferrari crash junction Channel NewsAsia May 28, 2012 Monday 1:38 PM GMT

"The only thing that could possibly improve the safety for this particular intersection is, we can probably add one more cantilever type of traffic signal, or the overhead type of traffic signal at the major intersection."

However, the Land Transport Authority said its planning engineers found no issues with the existing traffic scheme at the location.

"Our traffic planning engineers have driven through the junction of Victoria Street and Rochor Road during the day and in the middle of the night, to film the line of sight from a driver's perspective," LTA said.

"The traffic planning engineers have conducted a careful evaluation of the traffic signal configuration, and assessed that there are no issues with the existing traffic scheme at that location."

LTA said the traffic lights at the junction are distinct and can be clearly seen by the driver, whichever lane they are driving on.

The Singapore Road Safety Council has said it will consider the need to tighten specific road safety measures, after police investigations into the two accidents are completed.

**SUBJECT:** TRAFFIC SIGNALS (90%); VEHICLE TRAFFIC (90%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (89%); TRANSPORTATION PLANNING (89%); TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS (78%); VEHICULAR OFFENSES (74%); DRIVER BEHAVIOR (74%); ENGINEERING (63%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (63%)

**LOAD-DATE:** May 28, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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Channel NewsAsia

March 15, 2012 Thursday 4:14 AM GMT

## Train disruption on NEL caused by snapped overhead power cable

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 175 words

SINGAPORE: SBS Transit said the train disruption on the North East Line Thursday morning was caused by an overhead power cable that had snapped.

The problem was discovered during a regular nightly maintenance at 5.00 am at Outram Park Station.

SBS Transit commenced repair work immediately, but as extensive work had to be done, normal service operations at the five stations between Dhoby Ghaut and HarbourFront had to be disrupted.

It expects to get the failed power system on the North East Line up by 5.00 pm.

SBS Transit said engineers need more time to reconnect the wires and test the system to ensure it's safe.

NUS Professor of Civil Engineering **Lee Der Horng**, said: "For the MRT lines we have in Singapore, the East-West and North-South lines are using the third rail to receive power supply from the system to drive the train.

"However, for the North East Line, even though it is fully underground, power supply (is provided by) the overhead cable. The trains are equipped with collectors to receive power supply so that the train can be driven."

**SUBJECT:** TRAINS (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (90%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (78%); ENGINEERING (69%)

**COMPANY:** SBS TRANSIT LTD (92%)

**TICKER:** S61 (SGX) (92%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS485210 INTERURBAN & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (92%); SIC4131 INTERCITY & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (92%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (90%)

**LOAD-DATE:** March 15, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

Train disruption on NEL caused by snapped overhead power cable Channel NewsAsia March 15, 2012  
Thursday 4:14 AM GMT

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Channel NewsAsia

February 6, 2012 Monday 12:24 PM GMT

## Rise in feedback calls to LTA hotline

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 202 words

**DATELINE:** SINGAPORE

The number of hotline calls received by the Land Transport Authority (LTA) has increased by 57 per cent, from 647,897 in 2007 to almost 1.02 million calls in 2010.

According to LTA, the majority of the feedback received was regarding vehicle- and traffic-related matters, such as appeals against fines.

These include the non-payment of ERP charges, bus lane infringements and illegal parking offences.

LTA said that the increase was due to the "ongoing work under the Land Transport Master Plan (announced in 2008)" and that "land transport issues are top-of-mind for many who use the public transport system daily".

The transfer of enforcement functions for illegal parking from the Traffic Police to LTA last November has also contributed to the increase in feedback received.

Some said that more can be done to raise awareness of such offences.

Associate Professor **Lee Der-Hong**, from the Department of Civil Engineering at the National University of Singapore, said: "I personally would tend to attribute this to perhaps...some uncertainties from the road users in terms of the...bus lane operations, locations and durations, as well as...the locations of (ERP) gantries, different charging periods and charging rates."

**SUBJECT:** TRANSPORTATION PLANNING (90%); VEHICLE TRAFFIC (78%); VEHICULAR OFFENSES (77%); PARKING OFFENSES (76%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (73%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (67%)

**LOAD-DATE:** February 6, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

May 24, 2012 Thursday

## **Call for extra training, new licence for fast-car drivers; It'll ensure they are ready for supercars, say motoring experts**

**BYLINE:** Bryna Sim

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 563 words

BIGGER, more powerful cars should be driven only by experienced drivers.

Calling for a relook at how owners of fast cars can be better drivers, some motoring experts here are saying that special training should be mandatory for drivers who want to get behind the wheels of supercars.

This, they say, will ensure that those who have fast cars have adequate training to drive them, making the road safer for other users.

Motor Traders Association (MTA) vice-president Michael Wong said: 'Such drivers need to learn defensive driving techniques, how to manoeuvre tight corners, and how to effectively use their cars' technology.'

The recent accident involving a Ferrari and a taxi on May 12 that claimed three lives has turned the spotlight on the issue of supercar drivers.

Following the accident, public calls to tighten licensing for those who own supercars, including foreigners, have come hard and fast.

Currently, a newly minted driver can immediately get behind the wheel of any car. This includes, say, a McLaren F1 that has a top speed in excess of 380kmh.

There is no mandatory training required for owners of such cars.

Dr **Lee Der Horng**, a transport researcher at the National University of Singapore, said drivers of such high-performance cars and larger vehicles must be expected to be 'more proficient in controlling the vehicles and reacting under special circumstances'.

That is why some motoring bodies and experts have also suggested a tiered licence classification for drivers, similar to the one for motorcyclists here. Motorcyclists here spend at least a year on a smaller bike before getting licensed for a bigger one.

Many, like Mr Wong from the MTA, are for such a move.

'Our current car licensing system is outdated,' he said. 'I've been asking the Traffic Police to relook it since more than two years ago.'

Academics like Dr **Lee** and Nanyang Technological University adjunct associate professor Gopinath Menon said that more training would be 'useful' in helping fast-car drivers acquire the necessary skills.

Call for extra training, new licence for fast-car drivers; It'll ensure they are ready for supercars, say motoring experts The Straits Times (Singapore) May 24, 2012 Thursday

MP Seng Han Thong, deputy chairman of the Government Parliamentary Committee (GPC) for Transport, said any review of the driver licensing regime must focus on improving its effectiveness.

'Any driving licence holder must be a competent driver should he or she decide to drive a vehicle as allowed' by the licence, he said.

The idea of any potential new licence classification for drivers, and more training for supercar drivers, was met with mixed reactions.

A Porsche owner who wanted to be known only as Mr Tan, 44, said: 'If they reclassify me as a better driver... why not'

But a Honda driver who wanted to be known as Ms **Lee**, 39, felt it would be troublesome.

Mr Gerard Ee, chairman of the Public Transport Council, said that any new licence classification system for supercar drivers will not make the problem of road accidents go away. He added that, ultimately, it was about each driver's personal commitment to be responsible on the road.

Mr Cedric Foo, chairman of the GPC for Transport, said it was also important to look into the facts of traffic accidents here, to see if high-powered vehicles were indeed responsible for most of them. He said: 'If they are indeed the cause, then it would warrant a review of the car licensing system.'

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**SUBJECT:** AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY (90%); AUTO RACING (89%); DRIVERS LICENSES (89%); MOTORCYCLES (86%); TRANSPORTATION LAW (78%); VEHICLE TRAFFIC (78%); LICENSES & PERMITS (73%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (71%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** HENAN, CHINA (53%) CHINA (53%)

**LOAD-DATE:** May 23, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** Managing director Brenda Goh, 42, of The Makeover Inc, one of the venues with boxes to collect cheque donations for the Cheng family. -- PHOTO: MARK CHEONG FOR THE STRAITS TIMES

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

35 of 190 DOCUMENTS



TODAY (Singapore)

January 31, 2013 Thursday  
APM Edition

## 'Several factors to consider' for projected population growth

**BYLINE:** Sumita Sreedharan

**SECTION:** HNP; Singapore; Pg. 4

**LENGTH:** 357 words

**HIGHLIGHT:** Authorities need to improve land use planning, consider lifestyle changes, say analysts

SINGAPORE - The operational capacity of the new train lines, as well as better land use planning, are some factors which should be considered so that the transport network could meet the needs of a projected growth in Singapore's population in 2030, analysts said yesterday.

The Government's White Paper on population released on Tuesday said the population could grow to 6.9 million in 2030 as the Government moves to tackle the serious demographic double whammy of a shrinking and ageing population.

While the Government had rolled out plans to double the rail network earlier this month, transport analysts said more could be done to spread out the development of commercial nodes around the island.

"The authorities cannot focus on just figures, it needs to figure out how to accommodate the lifestyle changes of the population and, if land use does not change accordingly, more MRT lines may not help that much," said transport expert Associate Professor **Lee Der Horng** from the National University of Singapore.

According to the White Paper, more jobs will be conveniently located near to residential areas, reducing the need to commute.

Besides the maturing of growth areas in Jurong Lake District, Paya Lebar Central and One-North, more space will also be created for businesses nearer to residential areas, such as at Woodlands, Serangoon and Punggol.

Land has also been earmarked for modern industrial parks near residential areas, such as at Lorong Halus and Sengkang, the White Paper added.

Transport economist Anthony Chin, meanwhile, felt that the proposed expansion to the rail network will be able to accommodate the projected growth in population "on paper". But he added that other factors, such as

'Several factors to consider' for projected population growth TODAY (Singapore) January 31, 2013 Thursday

the timing of the completion of improvements to the rail system and giving priority to buses, would also play a part.

According to the White Paper, more integrated transport hubs will be built over the next decade, as areas such as Bukit Panjang, Hougang and Yishun are redeveloped.

The integrated transport hubs are aimed at enhancing commuter experience by making transfers between rail and bus services more seamless and convenient.

**SUBJECT:** LAND USE PLANNING (92%); POPULATION GROWTH (90%); TRAINS (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (89%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (89%); TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (77%); POPULATION ESTIMATES & PROJECTIONS (77%); POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS (77%); INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY (74%); AGING TRENDS (72%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (67%); MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (63%); AGING (55%) Transport

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (95%)

**LOAD-DATE:** May 23, 2013

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** While there are plans to double the rail network, transport analysts said more could be done to spread out the development of commercial nodes around the island.

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

36 of 190 DOCUMENTS

Channel NewsAsia

August 23, 2007 Thursday 1:08 PM GMT

## Extending ERP operational hours not enough to deter traffic jams

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 344 words

**DATELINE:** SINGAPORE

Extending ERP (Electronic Road Pricing) charging hours and setting up more gantries will not solve traffic jams in the long run, said a transport analyst.

He said the latest road pricing schemes may be aggressive but it's not enough to deter most drivers.

Most drivers said they will try to beat the peak hours or use alternative routes, especially during morning rush hour.

"I will come out earlier. It's now 7am right? So maybe I'll come out at 6am," said one motorist.

"Sometimes we really need to use the road, we have no choice, we still have to go through that road. But if you plan well, you can try to avoid it," said another.

A third motorist said: "It's the shortest way to town, so I'll still pay."

Most drivers are reluctant to let go of the wheel and take public transport simply because they've grown accustomed to the comfort and convenience of driving around in their own cars.

So even though it's going to be a more expensive ride ahead, they said they are willing to pay the price.

Dr **Lee Der-Hong**, Associate Professor of Civil Engineering at National University of Singapore said: "Pricing can be effective, so no matter how much you charge, some people may be affected. But I think the motorists or the general public are looking at whether we have a more comprehensive, integrated and overall solution.

"It will be too naive to expect that once you increase the price at this particular (area), the overall traffic congestion there will come down. For the car owners, we cannot just naively expect them to give up driving and switch to public transportation."

One solution offered is a public transport so good that even drivers are willing to give up their wheels.

The other is to charge more till motorists feel the pinch, like what London plans to do.

"People in London, they're paying five pounds... Personally, I think when the situation becomes necessary, the government may take the action to charge a very high ERP rate," said Dr **Lee**.

New York also has plans to charge motorists about \$10US when the city implements a similar road pricing system soon.

Extending ERP operational hours not enough to deter traffic jams Channel NewsAsia August 23, 2007  
Thursday 1:08 PM GMT

**SUBJECT:** VEHICLE TRAFFIC (90%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (89%); TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (78%); PRICE CHANGES (78%); PRICE INCREASES (73%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (73%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (65%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** LONDON, ENGLAND (85%)

**LOAD-DATE:** August 24, 2007

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

November 8, 2012 Thursday

## **One million vehicles on the road; Measures taken to manage rising pressure on road space, says LTA**

**BYLINE:** christopher tan senior correspondent

**SECTION:** TOP OF THE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 383 words

THE number of vehicles here has crossed the one million mark.

The figure includes foreign-registered vehicles, which make up about 5 per cent of the total number on the road here.

Excluding foreign vehicles, Singapore's own vehicle tally - currently at about 970,000 - is expected to hit the million mark in 2018. That is based on a capped growth rate of 0.5 per cent each year, which comes into effect next February. The current annual rate is 1 per cent.

Although the new cap is likely to result in the slowest 10-year vehicle growth rate - 6 per cent from last year to 2020 - since independence, the Land Transport Authority (LTA) said it will nevertheless put pressure on road space.

An LTA spokesman said 12 per cent of land space is already allocated to roads, and Singapore will face greater constraints in building new roads amid competing uses of land.

This is why the LTA has adopted a holistic package of measures that include building more roads, regulating vehicle growth, implementing traffic engineering solutions, promoting the use of public transport and managing traffic demand through increasing usage costs, she added.

Demand may not be evenly spread. For instance, LTA planners said traffic on Lornie Road will grow by as much as 30 per cent up to 2020. It cited this growth rate as an underlying reason for building a parallel road through Bukit Brown Cemetery.

Transport researcher **Lee Der-Hong** of the National University of Singapore said the country can accommodate a larger number of vehicles if it manages usage better. He cited the next-generation Electronic Road Pricing, which can charge drivers not only according to when and where they drive, but also for the distance they clock.

"If we can move towards the so-called 'usage-based' charging system, then it may not be necessary to tighten so much on ownership," Dr **Lee** added. "Traffic congestion is not from ownership but from usage."

But he warned that if car prices remained high, then usage-based measures may not work well. This is because the usage charges will be insignificant in relation to the price of the car.

"When ownership is not that unaffordable, and if public transport improves, drivers may be more willing to switch to taking the bus or train as and when necessary," he said.

One million vehicles on the road; Measures taken to manage rising pressure on road space, says LTA The Straits Times (Singapore) November 8, 2012 Thursday

christan@sph.com.sg

**SUBJECT:** VEHICLE TRAFFIC (78%); MOTOR VEHICLES (78%); ROAD & BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION (77%); HIGHWAY FUNDING (77%); NEWS BRIEFS (74%); ENGINEERING (68%); HIGHWAYS & STREETS (53%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (92%)

**LOAD-DATE:** November 7, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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The Business Times Singapore

December 17, 2011 Saturday

## **The Circle tightens around SMRT boss; Minister expresses concern over way incident was handled; after spate of disruptions, some ask if problem is systemic**

**BYLINE:** Joyce Hooi

**SECTION:** THE NEWS; Top Print Edition Stories

**LENGTH:** 1009 words

THIS year has been SMRT CEO Saw Phaik Hwa's annus horribilis and it might also be her last. Resignation has suddenly become an option for Ms Saw, after the worst train breakdown in the firm's 24 years of operations happened on her watch, on Thursday night.

When asked yesterday at a press conference if she would resign, Ms Saw said: 'It's something I would seriously consider if it is necessary to do so, but I think I will reserve comment at this moment.'

Ms Saw apologised for the five-hour breakdown on the North-South Line that left 127,000 commuters stranded, including the 4,000 that were stuck in train carriages with little or no ventilation.

This comes on the back of the 40-minute breakdown on the Circle Line, which caused a six-hour disruption to the full service, squarely in the middle of the morning rush period on Wednesday.

When asked about the likelihood of Ms Saw stepping down, Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew said: 'The important thing to us is to hold the SMRT board and management responsible and to deliver the commitments that they have made.'

He was speaking to reporters at Changi Airport last night, after returning from the Asean Transport Ministers' meeting in Phnom Penh. 'I was very disappointed with how this was handled, especially for the commuters that were in the affected trains.'

Calling Thursday night's disruption 'immensely serious', Mr Lui added that he had spoken to SMRT chairman Koh Yong Guan yesterday afternoon to 'reiterate the government's concern over the incident and how it was handled'.

Some wanted to move on from the incident. 'Singaporeans should just let go,' said housewife Kylie-Lee Wearnes.

If there is any sympathy for Ms Saw, there is certainly very little for the corporation itself, which has seen a chain of service disruptions and two major security breaches in recent years.

On two separate occasions, SMRT's train depots were broken into, and its train carriages vandalised. In September, a four-hour disruption on the Circle Line was blamed on a faulty cable.

The woes of the Circle Line have been especially difficult for transport specialists to swallow, given how new it is. Referring to SMRT's statement on Wednesday about the 'communication network problem' that had

The Circle tightens around SMRT boss; Minister expresses concern over way incident was handled; after spate of disruptions, some ask if problem is systemic The Business Times Singapore December 17, 2011 Saturday

not yet been fixed, associate professor **Lee Der Horng** of the National University of Singapore said: 'This, I can only say, is very disappointing. (The Circle Line) is brand-new . . . and this can still happen. I believe that before they opened, they worked with regulators to do the checking and testing.'

On Thursday night, Mr Lui said on Facebook: 'I do not know if these are isolated incidents or whether there are systemic and more serious underlying issues causing these breakdowns.'

He added yesterday that a team of specialists will be assembled by next week for a 'thorough review' of the transport system.

Anthony Chin, an associate professor of transport economics at NUS, told BT: 'The Circle Line took 10 years to complete - 10 years is enough time to test the system. If it's a systemic problem, then we're in for a lot of trouble.'

Where the 24-year-old North-South Line is concerned, Prof **Lee** - who is a transport researcher - was willing to concede that it might have been an issue of age. SMRT had attributed Thursday night's breakdown to a 'power rail problem'.

'It's possible as time goes by, the power rail may have some additional wear-and-tear. If this is the reason, it cannot be used as an excuse. The increased train service frequency doesn't mean we should have to compromise on service reliability. They should also intensify the maintenance,' he said.

Three years ago, the company made history with a record-breaking fine - \$387,176 - when the East-West Line experienced a seven-hour disruption. This affected 57,000 rush-hour commuters - less than half the number stranded on Thursday night.

While a fine of a similar size will not be material to SMRT, which took in \$161 million in net profit for its last financial year, some transport analysts are expecting a new record-breaking fine.

Under the Rapid Transit Systems Act, the LTA can fine rail operators up to \$1 million if service disruptions are found to be caused by negligence.

'The fine for this one has to be more. (LTA) also has to take into consideration public sentiment at the moment,' a transport analyst told BT.

'I am more concerned about the infrastructure at this point - whether they need to make a massive overhaul. The refunds to passengers and the cost of the broken window will be minute compared to SMRT's earnings.'

The window the analyst was referring to was broken by a marine insurance professional who had been among the thousands stuck in trains for almost one hour on Thursday night.

Even as SMRT tallies up the total cost, economists believe that the emotional and social costs borne by the passengers affected are bound to be hefty.

It's traumatic for a lot of people who had to walk in the tunnel, especially young children, and this will form their reference point about public transport.

This latest series of public transport snafus has come at an inopportune time, on the heels of an unpopular cab fare hike and in the wake of a Chinese national bus driver getting lost for two hours after being diverted from his route.

While the quality of service standards for bus operators have been tightened over the last few years, there has been no change to the financial penalties imposed since implementation in 2007.

'Cab fares have just been raised and (the disruptions) happen,' said Vishnu Varathan, economist at Mizuho Corporate Bank. '(The average commuter) will say, 'Why am I hemmed in" And we will attribute it to all kinds of things - our policy on foreigners, on how we regulate public transport and then you get pretty miserable,

The Circle tightens around SMRT boss; Minister expresses concern over way incident was handled; after spate of disruptions, some ask if problem is systemic The Business Times Singapore December 17, 2011 Saturday

thinking about these things.

'Maybe you can't argue that the breakdown was due to more (foreigners). That's a bit spurious. But you can argue that the fact that people have to miss three trains and we're seeing packed trains - that is something, though.'

**SUBJECT:** TRAINS (89%); TALKS & MEETINGS (76%); PRESS CONFERENCES (76%); TRANSPORTATION REGULATION (72%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (60%); INTERNET SOCIAL NETWORKING (60%)

**COMPANY:** FACEBOOK INC (50%)

**ORGANIZATION:** ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (55%)

**TICKER:** FB (NASDAQ) (50%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS519130 INTERNET PUBLISHING & BROADCASTING & WEB SEARCH PORTALS (50%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA (76%) SINGAPORE (90%); CAMBODIA (79%)

**LOAD-DATE:** December 16, 2011

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** Resignation has suddenly become an option for the SMRT CEO after the worst train breakdown in the firm's 24 years of operations happened on her watch, on Thursday night

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

39 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

September 30, 2011 Friday

## Don's paper aims to curb COE supply swings; Changes proposed by expert engaged by motor industry; LTA to get report later

**BYLINE:** Christopher Tan, Senior Correspondent

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 681 words

A PROFESSOR tasked with proposing changes to the 21-year-old certificate of entitlement (COE) system is expected to submit his academic paper to the Motor Traders Association (MTA) today.

Associate Professor **Lee Der Horng** of the National University of Singapore (NUS) was commissioned to do this early last month by the motor industry.

The paper will be submitted to the Land Transport Authority (LTA) shortly after for consideration.

The COE system was introduced in 1990 to control vehicle population growth. Car COE prices have fluctuated over the years with supply - from more than \$70,000 in the mid- to late-1990s (barring freak results topping \$100,000) to below \$10,000 as recently as 2009.

Current prices hover around \$50,000-\$65,000, at near record levels.

Among other issues, Prof **Lee's** report will put forward a case for flattening the annual supply of COEs, which has been prone to peaks and troughs in recent years. For instance, this year, there are about 30,000 COEs, which car buyers must bid for before they can own a vehicle. This is less than a third of the supply for as recently as 2008.

If nothing changes, the figure could balloon again by 2015 as cars bought during the mid-2000s of plentiful COEs reach the end of their 10-year lifespan.

One reason for the fluctuation is that supply is pegged to the number of vehicles taken off the road. This depends on the age profile of the vehicle population which ironically is influenced by COE supply. As long as this cycle remains unbroken, the flux will persist, observers said.

'It's very disruptive to the industry,' said MTA president Cheah Kim Teck. 'In the last few years, many companies have opened new showrooms, added more bays in workshops and hired more people. Now, they're retrenching and downsizing. In the next couple of years, we may have a huge number of COEs again.'

The current famine is estimated to have cost hundreds of jobs, if not more. Motor firms such as Borneo Motors, Cycle & Carriage and Kah Motor - among the biggest players - have pared down staff numbers. Borneo, as of end-2010, had undergone three rounds of retrenchments, laying off more than 100 people.

Japanese, Korean and cheaper brands have lost market share to European makes with more financial

Don's paper aims to curb COE supply swings; Changes proposed by expert engaged by motor industry; LTA to get report later The Straits Times (Singapore) September 30, 2011 Friday

muscle to bid for COEs. The distributor of Mazda, Mazda Singapore, is throwing in the towel after 55 years in the business while Nissan's Tan Chong started a parallel import business to supplement revenue.

Many, including parallel importers, have turned to selling used cars as well. Firms supporting the trade - such as upholsterers, car groomers, hi-fi installers and accessory shops - have also suffered.

Consumers are not spared. Because of soaring prices fuelled by the current short supply, they now pay about \$100,000 for a 1.6-litre Japanese sedan - double the price a few years ago. And come 2014 or so, the resale value of their \$100,000 cars will plummet if COE premiums fall on the back of rising supply.

'Why not bite the bullet and smooth out the supply? Instead of fluctuating from 30,000 to 100,000, we could normalise it to between 40,000 and 60,000 a year,' said Mr Cheah who is also motor operations chief executive of Jardine Cycle & Carriage.

The industry lobbied for similar changes to the COE system earlier this year but the Government has stood firm. This time, 'we thought it'd be useful if we had someone independent', Mr Cheah said, referring to Prof **Lee**. The US-trained Taiwanese worked on several government-funded intelligent transport system projects in the United States before joining NUS in 1999.

Prof **Lee** said his study will also make a case for excluding taxis from a COE category shared with smaller cars.

Many observers believe the growing taxi industry and the financial strength of cab operators are pushing up COE premiums in Category A - the mainstay of medium-income bidders.

The paper will also propose a separate category for 'green' vehicles.

'We're just hoping that we can open the hearts and ears of the LTA,' Mr Cheah said.

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**SUBJECT:** AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR PERFORMANCE (90%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (90%); LAYOFFS (85%); PRICE CHANGES (78%); IMPORT TRADE (77%); AUTOMOTIVE SALES (75%); MOTOR VEHICLE WHOLESALERS (75%); PRICE INCREASES (70%); MARKET SHARE (60%)

**COMPANY:** NISSAN MOTOR CO LTD (50%)

**TICKER:** 7201 (TSE) (50%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS336111 AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURING (50%); SIC3711 MOTOR VEHICLES & PASSENGER CAR BODIES (50%)

**LOAD-DATE:** January 4, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** Prof **Lee's** report is likely to argue for flattening the annual supply of COEs and excluding taxis from a category shared with smaller cars. -- ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

40 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Business Times Singapore

March 8, 2012 Thursday

## Public transport should stay a private matter: Tuck Yew

**BYLINE:** Joyce Hooi

**SECTION:** THE NEWS; Top Print Edition Stories

**LENGTH:** 699 words

(SINGAPORE) Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew yesterday defended the country's model of privately run public transport operators in Parliament. 'Our current model leaves the operations of trains and buses to commercial entities as we believe the long term public interest is best served this way.

'The profit incentive drives the operators towards higher efficiency and productivity, which keeps costs as low as possible . . . Otherwise, if the system is inefficiently run, the public will ultimately pay for the higher operating costs, either through higher fares, or greater government subsidies.'

The public transport model has come under scrutiny ever since a \$1.1 billion package was announced by the government to supplement the existing privately run bus fleet with 550 buses. The package covers the purchase of the buses and their net operating costs for 10 years.

SBS Transit will get about two-thirds of this allocation, while SMRT Buses will get one-third. The two operators will add 250 buses of their own and the total of 800 buses will represent a 20 per cent increase in capacity.

Some 70 per cent of the additions will be made within the first three years.

Even as Mr Lui cited the privately driven success stories of the MTR in Hong Kong and London Buses, he pointed out the need for the government to 'take control of key areas' which include planning rail lines and bus routes, as well as deciding on 'timely capacity injection to meet ridership growth'.

Transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** from the National University of Singapore told BT that there was an argument for both the private and nationalised models.

But where Singapore is concerned, the government's selective intervention now is justified, he said. 'Based on the government's efficiency that has been exhibited, we should be able to further increase the government's involvement in public transport,' Prof **Lee** said.

Government involvement has increased somewhat in recent years. The hybrid of asset ownership by the government and operations by a private firm was first introduced for trains on the Downtown Line with SBS Transit as its operator. SBS Transit, which also operates the North East Line (NEL), will add 60 weekly train trips to the NEL from March 19, it was announced yesterday.

This hybrid system might soon spread to buses. 'We will need to similarly relook the bus financing framework and decide . . . how best to introduce contestability,' Mr Lui said yesterday.

While the government shells out the \$1.1 billion for the additional buses, the operators will be expected to hold up their end of the bargain. Mr Lui said that the operators would be held to service levels for the entire

Public transport should stay a private matter: Tuck Yew The Business Times Singapore March 8, 2012  
Thursday

fleet that will go beyond what is required by the Public Transport Council (PTC).

For example, 95 per cent of all feeder services will have to operate within 10-minute scheduled intervals or better during peak periods, up from the current 90 per cent that PTC guidelines dictate.

These requirements, however, will not be enshrined as the PTC's Quality of Service standards for now.

As a more aggressive way to make operators pull up their socks, the government should consider setting up a separate body to operate the 550 buses, Prof **Lee** suggested. 'It will be like a third operator with a different choice and the other two operators will feel the pinch of competition.'

This hike in service standards follows a drop in customer satisfaction about public transport for the second year in a row. The survey for 2011 - carried out in October after fares were adjusted but before the train service disruptions - saw overall satisfaction drop 1.9 percentage points to 90.3 per cent, the Land Transport Authority said yesterday.

On the upside, 69.1 per cent of people believe that public transport had improved from the year before.

This year, some solace will come from the absence of fare adjustments to public transport, according to Mr Lui. Instead, the current fare formula will be reviewed this year but implemented in 2013. PTC member Richard Magnus will head the review committee.

The new fare formula in 2013 could take into account the fact that fare adjustments were not made in 2012, Mr Lui said.

**SUBJECT:** MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (90%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (90%); TRAINS (90%); URBAN RAIL SYSTEMS (90%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (89%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (89%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (78%); HYBRID VEHICLES (77%); PUBLIC FINANCE (76%); NATIONALIZATION (75%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (64%); GOVERNMENT GRANTS & SUBSIDIES (55%)

**COMPANY:** SBS TRANSIT LTD (85%)

**TICKER:** S61 (SGX) (85%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS485210 INTERURBAN & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (85%); SIC4131 INTERCITY & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (85%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** HONG KONG (79%)

**LOAD-DATE:** March 7, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** The public transport model has come under scrutiny ever since a \$1.1 billion package was announced by the government to supplement the existing privately run bus fleet with 550 buses

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

41 of 190 DOCUMENTS

Channel NewsAsia

January 28, 2012 Saturday 10:14 AM GMT

## Govt likely to have tighter control over public transport operators after review

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 469 words

SINGAPORE: The government will have a tighter control over public transport operators, once the ongoing comprehensive review on buses is completed.

Observers also believe operators will receive more support from the government to help them boost their fleet size, and introduce capacity in a timely fashion.

With complaints over reliability, frequency and comfort levels about Singapore's bus network getting more and more common, a review that has been going on since last August is looking to address these issues.

Ang Wei Neng, MP for Jurong GRC and a member of the Transport GPC, said: "With increased capacity, we can provide more services in this case. (We can also) help new services to improve their connectivity or increase capacity so that buses are less crowded."

Currently, operators are hampered by a manpower crunch.

SBS transit said it is facing a shortage of 180 bus captains, while SMRT said that apart from locals, there may be a need to hire foreigners from countries other than Malaysia or China.

As part of the review, the Land Transport Authority will soon reveal a programme that is expected to help operators grow their bus fleet and manpower in a sustainable manner.

Compared to the rail system, bus operators have other expenses apart from buying their own buses. They also pay Electronic Road Pricing (ERP) charges, road tax and the building costs of their own depots. Observers believe the programme will see the government offer help in these areas. The government may also look at ways to incentivise operators to boost capacity.

Analysts said authorities should set a clearer preferential policy for buses so that the operators will see the advantage to grow their fleets.

Associate Professor **Lee Der-Horng**, who is with the Department of Civil Engineering at the National University of Singapore, said: "The government should also provide a more friendly, more beneficial environment to our operators, by pushing the operators to provide timely service.

"However, we do not give buses priority when they travel along the road. If we have a very clear priority for buses, then the commuters will also see the benefit of taking the bus or public transport. At the the end of the day, the public transport operator will benefit."

Overall, analysts believe the regulator's role will be further strengthened following the review.

Assoc Prof **Lee** said: "Our regulator's role, we will further regulate, we will further monitor the performance,

Govt likely to have tighter control over public transport operators after review Channel NewsAsia January 28, 2012 Saturday 10:14 AM GMT

from our public transport operators, to ensure that they deliver what they are supposed to deliver.

"Not just to meet the minimum requirements, but a much higher standard, so that everyone in Singapore can benefit from a very good service quality from our public transport operators."

LTA said it will announce details of the programme in the coming months.

-CNA/ac

**SUBJECT:** MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (89%); INDUSTRY ANALYSTS (89%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (89%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (73%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (68%); TAXES & TAXATION (68%); ENGINEERING (65%); CONSTRUCTION COSTS (65%); FOREIGN LABOR (53%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (96%); MALAYSIA (79%)

**LOAD-DATE:** January 28, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

December 11, 2007 Tuesday

## On the road to match supply and demand

**BYLINE:** Maria Almenoar

**LENGTH:** 607 words

WITH the latest round of fare changes announced yesterday, an average 9km taxi ride here during peak periods will cost just as much as one in Hong Kong.

Riding in one of the 15,000 ComfortDelGro taxis here - which make up the majority of taxis on the road - will cost commuters \$14.35 from Monday while in Hong Kong, that same trip costs \$14.30, according to figures provided by the company yesterday.

Singapore's taxi system is often compared with Hong Kong's where - with twice as many people as here but fewer cabs than Singapore's 23,000 - it is still easy to get a taxi when you need one.

Some have argued that taxi fares here are too low, which is why commuters consider it just another public transport option, alongside buses and trains, instead of a premium service.

In cities like Sydney and London, for example, that same 9km trip would cost \$28.70 and \$51.60 respectively.

And although in the run-up to the fare hike, there were calls to raise the flag-down rate to as high as \$10, no one realistically expected ComfortDelGro to go that far.

Even National University of Singapore (NUS) postgraduate student Han Songguang's call for doubling the current flag-down rate was too much for the transport giant to stomach.

In his latest contribution on the topic to The Straits Times last month, he envisioned that a flag-down rate of \$5 was needed to weed out marginal users and ensure that taxis are always available for those who really need them.

Mr Han, like many industry players, wants commuters to understand that taxis are not mass transportation, and that the 'cheap and good' mentality could not be supported.

ComfortDelGro, which announced its increased flag-down fare of \$2.80 yesterday, agrees that taxis are a premium service and fully expects that the demand for taxi services will be reduced with the fare adjustments.

'This is not necessarily a bad thing as this will regulate demand and supply such that they are more evenly matched.

'Taxis are a door-to-door service and those willing to pay should get that service at the times and the places they need it most. We hope that the adjustment will result in that,' said spokesman Tammy Tan.

Transport researcher and NUS associate professor **Lee Der-Horng** as well as Mr Han, however, did not see the latest fare changes as being significant enough to have that effect.

On the road to match supply and demand The Straits Times (Singapore) December 11, 2007 Tuesday

All in all, said Mr Han, the majority of people will still view taxis as a form of public transport and commuters will find themselves back to square one - long queues and endless grouses despite higher fares.

A slightly more optimistic Prof **Lee** said the recent increase was a 'step in the right direction' to signalling that taxis were premium services.

'Fare adjustments give commuters an opportunity to seriously rethink their choice of transportation modes and plan their trips ahead of time,' he said.

'It will take commuters some time to adapt to the changes but they will eventually go back to using taxis.'

In one area, however, things have become worse.

A common complaint of cabbies and passengers was that the menu of surcharges that determined the final fare was just too hard to figure out.

And instead of simplifying matters, Mr Han believes it has become more complicated with more distance-based percentage surcharges and higher flat surcharges.

'Commuters and especially tourists unfamiliar with the surcharges may fall prey to errant cabbies who overcharge and conversely cabbies may find it hard to explain the surcharges to their passengers.'

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How fares compare

How much a 9km taxi ride costs during peak periods

Hong Kong: \$14.30

Singapore: \$14.35 from Monday

Sydney: \$28.70

London: \$51.60

**SUBJECT:** URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (89%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (89%); TAXICABS & LIMOUSINES (78%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (87%)

**COMPANY:** COMFORTDELGRO CORP LTD (58%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (94%); HONG KONG (92%)

**LOAD-DATE:** December 10, 2007

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

43 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

August 25, 2013 Sunday

## **Most accidents happen along PIE; But 42.8km-long PIE had fewer accidents per km than CTE and SLE in past 3 months**

**BYLINE:** Lim Yan Liang

**SECTION:** NEWS; Home

**LENGTH:** 538 words

The Pan-Island Expressway (PIE) is the highway where the most traffic accidents occurred over the past three months.

Singapore's longest highway, at 42.8km, had at least 441 accidents, with the highest concentration around the Eng Neo Avenue exit. There were 48 accidents there, evenly split in both directions.

The numbers were gleaned from more than 2,000 tweets by the Land Transport Authority's @LTAsg Twitter account between May 26 and Aug 22. The automated traffic updates are based on real-time surveillance cameras and the Expressway Monitoring Advisory System.

Although the PIE had the highest number of accidents, it fell behind the Central Expressway (CTE) and Seletar Expressway (SLE) when the number of accidents was set against the length of the road.

The 15.5km CTE had at least 164 accidents, or 10.58 per km, and the 12km SLE had 125 accidents, or 10.42 per km, compared with the PIE's 10.3 per km.

On Aug 9, a horrific CTE accident before the Yio Chu Kang exit left a Singaporean, his Korean girlfriend and her parents dead.

Aside from Eng Neo, other hot spots include a stretch of the PIE near Paya Lebar, the CTE near the PIE (Changi) exit and the SLE near Mandai Road. Each recorded at least 25 accidents.

Transport experts had differing explanations for the accidents on expressways. National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** said many crash areas were on the PIE because the oldest expressway was not built to handle the high volume of traffic that now flows through daily.

He said there is also some undulation on parts of the PIE, where the road rises and falls, and affects how far ahead a motorist can see. "The driver may not be able to see traffic in front of him clearly until he moves to the top of the hump, but because of his speed, it might be too late," he said.

That, coupled with heavy and fast-moving traffic, is what makes parts of the PIE near Mount Pleasant and Stevens Road dangerous, he added.

Like the Eng Neo Avenue to Adam Road portion of the PIE, large curves - such as the one at the CTE near the PIE (Changi) exit - could also cause a "shockwave", where high-speed traffic meets slower traffic with disastrous consequences.

Most accidents happen along PIE; But 42.8km-long PIE had fewer accidents per km than CTE and SLE in past 3 months The Straits Times (Singapore) August 25, 2013 Sunday

Dr Park Byung Joon, head of the urban transport management programme at SIM University, agreed with this assessment, but added that most accidents occur as drivers enter or leave the expressway.

"Accidents are prone to happen where there is a criss-crossing in the flow of cars," he said. "When you change lanes or try to exit, you have to look at the sides and not just in front. If the car in front of you then brakes, your reaction will likely be slower."

He said that accidents can also happen in tunnels, such as the CTE tunnel near Merchant Road, as drivers expect traffic to be fast-moving.

Retired LTA planner Gopinath Menon felt the accident rate reflected heavy use of expressways, and that expressway accidents sometimes result in secondary accidents.

"We have 161km of expressway (out of a 3,400km road network) carrying more than half the traffic volume of the roads," he said.

"Usage is high, traffic is fast and any breakdown compounds the problem. I wouldn't blame road design for the accidents."

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**SUBJECT:** TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS (90%); VEHICLE TRAFFIC (89%); INTERNET SOCIAL NETWORKING (71%); SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY (70%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (94%)

**LOAD-DATE:** August 24, 2013

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

44 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

April 23, 2010 Friday

## Circle Line: No plan to go full circle yet; Govt to assess ridership before deciding on 4km 'missing link' in route

**BYLINE:** Christopher Tan, Senior Correspondent

**LENGTH:** 806 words

THE name 'Circle Line' is a bit of a misnomer.

Even when all 29 stations along its 33km route are in use by some time next year, it will not be a full circle: A gap of about 4km long will still separate the HarbourFront and Marina Bay stations.

The Ministry of Transport has not ruled out closing this 'missing link', but is now taking a 'wait and see' approach. It said: 'We have to assess whether there's sufficient ridership to justify such a direct linkage, as there are already alternatives now through the current rail network.'

It will continue monitoring the situation, it added.

Dr Lim Wee Kiak, who chairs the Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport, said he believes closing the loop would 'make sense' and is glad the Government is not dismissing the option.

'Commuters will then be able to travel clockwise or anti-clockwise, and trains don't have to make a U-turn to go the other way,' he pointed out.

Circle Line operator SMRT Corp agrees.

SMRT president Saw Phaik Hwa, noting also that a loop service will mean a quicker turnaround for the trains, said: 'We welcome rail extensions that bring greater accessibility to commuters.'

Making the Circle Line go full circle will particularly benefit commuters now in the south-west. Those living in West Coast, Pasir Panjang and Telok Blangah will be able to get to the Marina downtown area in one train ride, as opposed to transferring to the North-East Line at HarbourFront, heading north to Dhoby Ghaut and then south again to Marina.

Closing the loop will also get these commuters more quickly to and from Suntec City, Beach Road, the National Stadium and the Old Airport Road hawker centre without needing to switch lines.

Telok Blangah resident Hwang Jeng Ming, 30, has realised this.

The maritime executive said that closing the loop will give people like him a direct route to Marina and farther east without having to change to another train.

If the extension is built, it will not be the first. In 2005, the Government announced that the Circle Line would be extended to the Marina downtown, where the Marina Bay Sands integrated resort and other commercial and leisure developments are sited.

Transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** of the National University of Singapore (NUS) has asked his students

Circle Line: No plan to go full circle yet; Govt to assess ridership before deciding on 4km 'missing link' in route The Straits Times (Singapore) April 23, 2010 Friday

to assess the merits of closing the loop.

Their conclusion? It should be done, in view of the proposed redevelopment of Tanjong Pagar port into a new downtown area the size of Marina Bay, which sits where the gap in the line now is.

The provision of a rapid transit system is crucial to the redevelopment of the area, said Dr **Lee**. He added: 'My view is that we should adopt a 'transit-oriented development' approach.' The term refers to building an urban development around a highly efficient transit system that is within walking distance for those who live, work or play in it.

But Associate Professor Anthony Chin, who specialises in transport economics at NUS, warned that bridging the Circle Line's 'missing link' should be weighed against other considerations.

Closing the loop will have several benefits to a group of commuters, he agreed, but pointed out: 'Like all transport infrastructure projects, the central issue is economic and financial viability. So until the port moves out and enough density is created, one will have a hard time justifying it.' The Government must weigh very carefully between addressing more pressing needs versus spending on closing the loop, he added.

The new downtown area proposed for the site where the port now sits was suggested by the Economic Strategies Committee. It suggested that when the port's current lease expires in 2027, it could be re-sited in, say, Tuas.

Construction industry sources estimate that the link - if it is to have four stops - will cost between \$1.5 billion and \$2 billion at today's cost.

Observers note that the Land Transport Masterplan has indicated that new lines can be built if they do not compromise the viability of the network. So, given that the viability of every individual new line is not a must now, the link could be built sooner rather than later.

The Straits Times understands that the Government has studied another option to closing the loop - by linking HarbourFront to the East-West line's Tanjong Pagar station, and then joining it to Marina Bay.

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#### CONVENIENCE FACTOR

'Commuters will then be able to travel clockwise or anti-clockwise, and trains don't have to make a U-turn to go the other way.'

Dr Lim Wee Kiak, chairman of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport

#### ECONOMIC VIABILITY

'Like all transport infrastructure projects, the central issue is economic and financial viability. So until the port moves out and enough density is created, one will have a hard time justifying it.'

Associate Professor Anthony Chin, who specialises in transport economics at NUS

**SUBJECT:** TRAINS (89%); CITY LIFE (87%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (76%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (76%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (73%); BEACHES (69%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (79%) SINGAPORE (79%)

**LOAD-DATE:** April 22, 2010

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

Circle Line: No plan to go full circle yet; Govt to assess ridership before deciding on 4km 'missing link' in route The Straits Times (Singapore) April 23, 2010 Friday

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

February 26, 2012 Sunday

## **The \$1.1 billion bus question; As public debate rages, experts query network efficiency and operators' obligations**

**BYLINE:** Christopher Tan, Senior Correspondent

**SECTION:** NEWS

**LENGTH:** 1407 words

The Government's surprise \$1.1 billion injection to help bus operators ramp up capacity over the next five years was intended to be a bold 'put your money where your mouth is' step to tackle transport woes.

Since it would take time to build up the rail network, one way to relieve daily congestion in public transport would be to add more buses, said Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam in his Feb 17 Budget statement.

Also, 60 per cent of all passenger trips are made on buses.

The Government will provide funding for 550 buses while the two operators - SBS Transit and SMRT - will add another 250 buses. These 800 buses will mean a 20 per cent increase to the current fleet. The Government will set aside \$1.1 billion for both the purchase of buses and the running costs for 10 years.

But this move has sparked a lively public debate, with many asking why public funds should be used to subsidise the two profitable publicly listed companies.

A crop of letters to the press took up this issue in recent days, as did Internet chatter and reactions posted on the Government's feedback unit, Reach.

Regular commuter Tristan Yeo found it 'puzzling' that the Government needed to do this when these firms have bought their own buses all along with profits earned from fare revenue and related businesses such as advertising and rental.

Transport researcher **Lee Der Horng**, of the National University of Singapore, said: 'We do need more buses to cater to the increasing demand. However, I think the public will have concerns regarding why taxpayers' money is being used to help profitable and private operators.'

He added: 'The Government really should configure a transparent and stricter regulatory framework to specify the obligations and responsibilities of the operators.'

SBS Transit, which runs three-quarters of the 4,000 public buses in Singapore, incurred an operating loss of \$6 million on its bus business last year, down from a profit of \$14.9 million in 2010.

But the company still made \$36.7 million overall, via revenues from its other businesses, such as rail and advertising.

The \$1.1 billion bus question; As public debate rages, experts query network efficiency and operators' obligations The Straits Times (Singapore) February 26, 2012 Sunday

SMRT made \$68.9million during its first half ended Sept30, 2011, even though its bus operations incurred an operating loss of \$6.2 million. In SMRT's case, its bus business has usually been loss-incurring.

Pointing to how the overall business portfolios of SBS Transit and SMRT Corp are profitable, Mr Zafar Momin, who teaches strategy implementation at the Nanyang Business School, asked: 'Can they not continue to cross-subsidise their bus operations until they figure out a more efficient operating model for buses'

He added: 'They cannot expect to make high returns on every line of business.'

### Hybrid systems

Bus systems in many cities - such as London, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Adelaide and Perth - are 'hybrid' systems, pointed out Assistant Professor Paul Barter, who teaches transport policy at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.

They are operated by listed private-sector companies which receive substantial government subsidies.

In countries such as Australia and Britain, the government buys the buses and pays for all or a large part of the operating costs.

It carves up routes into parcels and puts them up for tender. Successful bidders run the services, and are paid a fixed basic fee. They are paid bonuses if they meet set key performance indicators, and are penalised if they fail.

The Singapore Government's latest move, albeit meant as a 'one-time' measure, might signal a shift towards such a 'hybrid' model, said some observers.

But Prof Barter added: 'If there are going to be subsidies, then we need strict government oversight to make sure we get the service improvements we pay for and that the extra money does not just boost dividends or stock prices.'

The ongoing debate gets to the heart of just how transport systems - both rail and bus operations - should be financed.

For rail, the practice in Singapore has been for the state to build the infrastructure and supply the first set of operating assets.

Since the first MRT line was built more than 20 years ago, and including new lines that will roll out by 2020, the Government has committed some \$70 billion. (This figure does not factor in the present value of this money.)

Going forward, the rail financing regime will change to one where the Government continues to build the infrastructure but leases operating assets to the operators.

For buses, the practice has been to give out indirect subsidies.

The two bus operators have not needed to bid for Certificates of Entitlement, which practically all other vehicle buyers must secure.

They have also recently been given waiver of the Additional Registration Fee, the main vehicle tax, and duty on diesel, which until a few years ago was dutiable.

Moreover, their buses are allowed to be kept on the road for 20 years, twice that of almost all other vehicles; and they are charged a nominal rent for the space their interchanges take up. Taxpayers also pay for bus stops and interchanges.

The \$1.1 billion bus question; As public debate rages, experts query network efficiency and operators' obligations The Straits Times (Singapore) February 26, 2012 Sunday

To be sure, government financial support for public good is common in a number of other sectors, including health care, public housing and education.

Interestingly, in the case of rail, the state makes back what it spends on its infrastructural investment through land sales around MRT stations. These plots fetch higher prices than elsewhere. This does not happen with its bus investments.

The move announced on Feb 17 marks a significant change. But this does not necessarily mean the current system is broken, as some observers seem to have suggested.

It is, however, a quick fix for the transport crunch.

Singapore's population explosion in the last five years or so - mainly from new residents - has put a huge strain on the public transport system.

Ramping up bus capacity can be done much faster than raising rail capacity. Each new MRT line takes about seven years to build. It is this urgency that has motivated the \$1.1 billion subsidy package.

Academics and industry experts have posed other questions. Veteran transport consultant Bruno Wildermuth says Singapore does not really need more buses, but 'better utilisation' of buses.

'There are many empty buses moving around because of the lack of a rational network,' he said.

Mr Zafar asked: 'Are our bus operations run as well and as creatively as possible? Over the years, despite many fare increases, how have cost efficiencies improved?'

Whichever way forward, observers say that subsidising bus operations - even if it is a one-off measure - must be executed well so that all the mechanics of the scheme are transparent to the public and the result a positive one for commuters.

Associate Professor Anthony Chin, who specialises in transport economics at the National University of Singapore, says more needs to be done to explain the rationale for the Government's latest move on buses.

'They must manage this well. It's a question of handling the public's perception of fairness.'

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'The Government should help bus operators provide new buses, but they shouldn't increase taxes.'

**Robin Chia, 22, undergraduate**

'Why should tax money be used for buses when we already pay bus fares every day? It's like a double whammy for bus passengers.'

**Hafifah Afif, 22, undergraduate**

'I think the Government should definitely subsidise buses. People are paying taxes and buses are public goods after all.'

**Dennis Tan, 18, polytechnic student**

'Bus frequencies are okay, just that now and then, bus drivers brake suddenly.'

**Thanappal K. Nadeson, 58, construction supervisor**

'Bus companies do provide good service. But when you're rushing and the bus doesn't come, you won't be that happy.'

The \$1.1 billion bus question; As public debate rages, experts query network efficiency and operators' obligations The Straits Times (Singapore) February 26, 2012 Sunday

**Ryan Chua, 33, Cisco transaction officer**

'Bus frequencies need to improve especially during peak hours. The waiting time for a bus should preferably not exceed five minutes.'

**Cheong Boon Keng, 49, library assistant**

'I once waited for more than half an hour for a bus, so bus frequencies should be improved.'

**Prema Bes, 51, housekeeper**

'People are actually fine with the number of buses now. If they have more buses, I hope they don't increase the prices.'

**Faridah Sinwan, 45, customer service officer**

**Should the Government pump in \$1.1 billion to help boost bus capacity? And how should the 800 new buses be deployed? Send your views to [stlocal@sph.com.sg](mailto:stlocal@sph.com.sg)**

**SUBJECT:** MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (91%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (90%); FINANCIAL RESULTS (86%); COMPANY LOSSES (86%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (78%); BUDGETS (78%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (76%); PRIME MINISTERS (73%); HEADS OF STATE & GOVERNMENT (73%); BUSINESS EDUCATION (69%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** HENAN, CHINA (58%) SINGAPORE (92%); CHINA (58%)

**LOAD-DATE:** February 25, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** A higher-quality bus system could encourage more people to leave their cars at home and take public transport, say transport observers. -- ST PHOTO: RAJ NADARAJAN

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

46 of 190 DOCUMENTS

Channel NewsAsia

July 6, 2013 Saturday 3:50 PM GMT

## Public consultation to refine COE system ends on Sunday

**BYLINE:** Hetty Musfirah Abdul Khamid

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 633 words

SINGAPORE: To give mass-market car buyers a better chance at securing a Certificate of Entitlement (COE), industry players and observers are pushing for the system to be re-categorised based on engine power rather than engine capacity alone. Some Singaporeans are also calling for greater transparency, with a "pay-as-you-bid" system. Their suggestions come as the public consultation to refine the COE system ends on Sunday. Cars with an engine capacity of 1,600 or less fall under Category A, traditionally for mass-market cars.

But in recent years, luxury car models have become more common in Category A. Singapore Vehicle Traders Association's Honorary Secretary, Mr Raymond Tang, said: "A lot of continental cars and luxury cars have flowed into Category A, and it causes some of the middle- and low-range cars having a lot of problems in getting a COE secured, because luxury cars and continental cars have better buffer and better budget to bid." To better differentiate the two, the Land Transport Authority (LTA) is seeking views on whether the COE system should be re-categorised based on engine power. Through its online survey, participants are asked what should be the maximum "brake horse power" for Category A. Experts agree introducing a cap for engine power will be useful, but engine capacity should still remain as a criteria. Associate Professor **Lee Der Horng**, transport researcher at National University of Singapore, said: "Based on my personal findings, in terms of the engine capacity, personally I feel that it should remain at 1.6 litres. "But when it comes to the engine horse power, if we can capped it around 135 (bhp,) then it will be very effective in preventing the luxury brands take up the Category A COE. "(It) should not just be based on one single parameter or criterion. We should have a matrix formed so that we can have a more balanced categorisation." The Singapore Vehicle Traders Association supports factoring both engine power and capacity. But it also proposes that a surcharge be imposed on cars with higher engine power. But others feel that re-categorising the COE based on the Open Market Value (OMV) of cars will be more effective. "An OMV system, where you have budget cars, middle-end cars and slightly higher-end cars in different categories...it would work better than purely (based on) engine power and engine capacity," said Mr Leonard Chew, a participant at a COE forum held at the Thomson Community Club. Most also supported the idea of a "pay-as-you-bid" system, where car buyers themselves bid for the COE. Currently, to get a COE, bidders pay the price submitted by the current lowest successful bidder plus S\$1. Mr Hri Kumar Nair, MP for Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC, said: "Overwhelmingly, people wanted the car dealers and those who profit from the system to get out of the system. They will like those who want to buy a car to bid for their own COEs. They think that the more transparent the system is and the less you involve other people, other organisations, the fewer layers you have, you are likely to reduce the price." Views were mixed when it comes to imposing additional taxes on those who want to own more than one car. Mr Nair said: "A number of people realised or considered that having a second car already entails paying more, a second COE, more road taxes and so on. So the penalties are already built into the system, and they question if there's a need to impose an additional tax to it." Mr Nair said he intends to collate the feedback and suggestions into a paper, which will then be presented to Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew. The LTA says about 3,500 people have participated in its consultation process. All suggestions and ideas received will be duly assessed and it will give an update on the issue

Public consultation to refine COE system ends on Sunday Channel NewsAsia July 6, 2013 Saturday 3:50  
PM GMT

later this year.Â

**SUBJECT:** MOTOR VEHICLES (91%); LUXURY GOODS (90%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY  
PROFESSORS (64%)

**LOAD-DATE:** July 6, 2013

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Channel NewsAsia

February 18, 2012 Saturday 11:40 AM GMT

## Carbon Emissions-based Scheme welcomed

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 311 words

SINGAPORE: Motor industry players said the introduction of the new Carbon Emissions-based Scheme announced on Friday in the Budget statement, is a positive move.

They said some green car buyers could also potentially enjoy a higher rebate compared to the existing Green Vehicle Rebate Scheme.

The take-up rate of green vehicles in Singapore remains modest, despite the availability of a Green Vehicle Rebate Scheme since 2001.

Those with electric or hybrid cars stand to enjoy a 40 per cent rebate, which can offset their vehicles' Additional Registration Fee (ARF).

But authorities realised there's a drawback.

Compared to hybrid vehicles, some petrol cars with smaller engine capacities emit less carbon.

So the new Carbon Emissions-based Scheme will kick in.

Those with cars that emit less carbon will enjoy rebates of up to S\$20,000 on their ARF.

Meanwhile, those with cars that are more pollutive will be slapped with a registration surcharge of up to S\$20,000.

Analysts said this is a fairer and more effective way to drive home the green message.

National University of Singapore Department of Civil Engineering Associate Professor **Lee Der-Hong** said: "I think our car dealers, they may bring in more diesel engine vehicles and more vehicles other than the conventional so-called green vehicle that we have in Singapore, into the vehicle market.

"So overall speaking, in the end, the environment will receive the benefit.

"More and more people are conscious about the environment, and this is actually not only CO<sub>2</sub>, so this is where it is worth commenting on the new GVR scheme which focuses on carbon emissions.

"The owners of big luxury cars will be affected, but I don't think it will influence sales. This is because luxury car owners are wealthier."

The new scheme will kick in for all passenger cars when the Green Vehicle Rebate scheme expires at the end of this year.

**SUBJECT:** EMISSIONS (92%); ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY (90%); GREENHOUSE GASES (90%);

Carbon Emissions-based Scheme welcomed Channel NewsAsia February 18, 2012 Saturday 11:40 AM  
GMT

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY & ENVIRONMENT (90%); LUXURY GOODS (89%); AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR PERFORMANCE (89%); MOTOR VEHICLES (89%); BUSINESS FORECASTS (78%); HYBRID VEHICLES (78%); AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY (77%); BUDGETS (73%); NEW CAR DEALERS (72%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (66%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (94%)

**LOAD-DATE:** February 18, 2012

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

December 17, 2011 Saturday

## **Govt seeking firms' feedback; Most companies say energy plans already in place**

**BYLINE:** Grace Chua & Jessica Cheam

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 976 words

THE Government is seeking public feedback on the draft of a new law which would get energy-hungry firms to be more efficient.

Reacting to the draft bill yesterday, many of the affected companies said they already have energy plans and personnel in place, while commentators welcomed the efforts to improve energy efficiency.

Under the proposed Energy Conservation Act, firms in the industrial and transport sectors that consume more than 15 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of energy a year - roughly equivalent to the energy consumed by 3,000 four-room HDB households - would have to appoint an energy manager.

They would also have to monitor and report energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as submit energy efficiency improvement plans.

Failing to do so warrants a maximum fine of \$10,000 on the first offence, \$20,000 on the second, and \$1,000 a day thereafter.

By comparison, those who break construction noise control laws under the Environmental Protection and Management Act face a first-offence fine not exceeding \$10,000.

If passed next year, the Energy Conservation Act will come into force from 2013.

Firms that might be affected include petroleum refiners, real estate developers and land transport operators. It is estimated that the Act could affect some 200 such companies.

Current energy performance standards and labelling schemes for household products and cars governed by other legislation will also be consolidated into the Act.

These include labelling for air-conditioners, fridges and clothes dryers, minimum efficiency standards for fridges, and fuel economy labelling for passenger cars and light goods vehicles under the Environmental Protection and Management Act.

In its 2010 sustainability report, property developer City Developments said that it 'already exceeds' the requirements. It said the upcoming legislations have 'no impact' on its operations.

Its report said it has energy managers in place and has also been disclosing its energy and carbon emission data in its reports since 2008.

Likewise, land transport operator ComfortDelgro said it has pledged to protect the environment since 2007

Govt seeking firms' feedback; Most companies say energy plans already in place The Straits Times  
(Singapore) December 17, 2011 Saturday

by recycling waste and reducing vehicle emissions.

ComfortDelgro spokesman Tammy Tan said the firm was studying the details of the proposed Bill and welcomed efforts to improve energy use and formalise environmental conservation.

A spokesman for oil and gas company Shell said it hoped the requirements for the certified energy manager and energy performance reporting format would be 'customised and aligned to each industry'.

Fellow petrochemical firm ExxonMobil said it would review the draft Act in greater detail over the consultation period. A spokesman said the firm was on track to achieve its goal of improving energy efficiency across its worldwide operations by at least 10 per cent between 2002 and 2012.

Experts praised the draft Act for compelling the economy to go greener.

Mr Edwin Khew, chairman of the Sustainable Energy Association of Singapore (SEAS), noted that the Act does not take effect until 2013, which gives the industry time to adjust.

But companies that use more than 15GWh of energy per year are usually large firms which can afford the adjustment, he said.

'This should also help companies improve on their bottom line, especially if energy cost continues to go up,' he said.

In the future, companies could also be taxed based on their carbon footprint, and they should prepare for this, he added.

National University of Singapore (NUS) transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** noted that the transport sector is rightly included, as it consumes about 19 per cent of energy here.

But during the transition to boost energy efficiency, he said, costs could 'come up a bit'.

'The operator should also take this as an opportunity to become more energy-efficient, and therefore more competitive.'

His NUS colleague, sustainability researcher Kua Harn-Wei, added that an energy conservation Act should be complemented by incentives or technical help for companies to go green.

Some such schemes already exist, like the Singapore Certified Energy Manager programme to train and certify energy managers.

But he said the two weeks given for public consultation might be too brief.

The text of the draft Bill does not specify which country's laws it is based on, but the UK and India have similar legislations.

The draft Bill, posted online on Thursday evening, can be viewed on the Reach government site at <http://bit.ly/rQlphP>, where feedback can be given.

The feedback period closes on Dec 28.

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### **Act aims to help S'pore hit target**

THE draft Energy Conservation Act, which is up for public consultation over the next two weeks, covers large energy users that consume at least 15 gigawatt-hours each year.

Govt seeking firms' feedback; Most companies say energy plans already in place The Straits Times  
(Singapore) December 17, 2011 Saturday

It is meant to help Singapore reach its target of improving its energy efficiency.

By 2030, the Republic aims to consume 35 per cent less energy per unit of gross domestic product than it did in 2005.

If passed, the Act will come into force from 2013.

Then, major users of energy in the industrial and transport sectors must:

- o Appoint a qualified, trained energy manager;
- o Monitor and report energy use and emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide; and
- o Submit energy efficiency improvement plans.

The proposed Act also covers energy-efficiency labelling and standards, which used to be set out in the Environmental Protection and Management Act.

It also requires certain appliances and vehicles to have energy- and fuel-efficiency labels. There will be minimum energy performance standards for some appliances.

## CHANGING FOR THE BETTER

'The operator should take this as an opportunity to become more energy-efficient, and therefore more competitive.'

Transport researcher **Lee Der Horng**

**SUBJECT:** LEGISLATION (91%); ENERGY EFFICIENCY & CONSERVATION (90%); REAL ESTATE (90%); ENERGY CONSUMPTION (90%); ENERGY & UTILITY POLICY (90%); ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES (89%); AIR QUALITY REGULATION (89%); EMISSIONS (89%); SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (88%); VEHICLE EMISSIONS (88%); REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT (88%); PRODUCT LABELING (86%); OIL & GAS INDUSTRY (78%); PETROLEUM PRODUCTS (74%); CRUDE OIL & NATURAL GAS EXTRACTION (74%); OIL & GAS EXTRACTION (74%); GREENHOUSE GASES (74%); CRIMINAL FINES (73%); RENEWABLE ENERGY (73%); LAND SUBDIVISION (71%); PETROCHEMICALS INDUSTRY (71%); PETROCHEMICALS (69%); FINES & PENALTIES (68%); PETROLEUM REFINERIES (66%); MOTOR VEHICLES (65%); CITIES (50%)

**COMPANY:** EXXON MOBIL CORP (58%); COMFORTDELGRO CORP LTD (52%); ROYAL DUTCH SHELL PLC (52%)

**TICKER:** XOM (NYSE) (58%); C52 (SGX) (52%); RDSA (LSE) (52%); RDSA (AMS) (52%); RDS.B (NYSE) (52%); RDS.A (NYSE) (52%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS325110 PETROCHEMICAL MANUFACTURING (58%); NAICS324110 PETROLEUM REFINERIES (58%); NAICS211111 CRUDE PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS EXTRACTION (58%); NAICS485310 TAXI SERVICE (52%); NAICS485210 INTERURBAN & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (52%); SIC4131 INTERCITY & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (52%); SIC4121 TAXICABS (52%); NAICS447110 GASOLINE STATIONS WITH CONVENIENCE STORES (52%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (92%)

**LOAD-DATE:** December 16, 2011

Govt seeking firms' feedback; Most companies say energy plans already in place The Straits Times  
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The Straits Times (Singapore)

January 2, 2011 Sunday

## Transit towards a greener, more accessible system

**BYLINE:** Grace Chua

**LENGTH:** 791 words

Singapore's transport successes are well known, but its transport system could be greener, with easier access for the old and infirm.

A new study of urban transport in 15 cities, conducted by consulting firm Accenture, came to that conclusion about Singapore and what it terms as fellow 'laboratory' cities, such as Seoul in South Korea.

Such cities already use effective solutions, such as congestion charges and car-pooling incentives, but they can go even further, said Accenture managing partner **Lee** Won Joon.

He oversaw the Asian segment of the study, which looked at a wide range of cities picked for their different sizes, stages of development and locations.

The study will be used for Accenture projects on urbanisation and intelligent cities - urban centres which use technology to cut energy consumption, become more sustainable and respond faster to residents' needs.

Mr **Lee** pointed out Singapore's successes in using congestion charges and cutting down the car population with quota schemes, and acknowledged its attempts to beef up its public transport network.

But Singapore's population is burgeoning and commuters' expectations are higher, he said.

The popular sentiment is that roads are crowded with too many cars, while buses are too slow and trains too crowded or infrequent.

Last year, customer satisfaction with public transport fell, according to the annual Customer Satisfaction Index by Singapore Management University's Institute of Service Excellence.

Also, transport should be made more environmentally friendly - not just by cutting back on the number of private cars, but also by improving on public transport.

In Mr **Lee's** native Seoul, for example, most public buses run on natural gas, whereas many here run on diesel.

National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** supported the use of clean-energy public transport, and suggested that Singapore aim for large scale shared-access electric vehicle (EV) schemes rather than personal EVs.

The MRT Circle Line has already received a Green Mark for Rapid Transit Systems, for its use of braking systems which reuse energy and other measures.

The Green Mark framework will assess the environmental friendliness of MRT lines such as the Downtown Line, the first stage of which is set to open in 2013.

Researchers also felt that transport measures must be properly integrated with urban planning.

For example, the Accenture report noted that parking restrictions in the city centre sometimes cause businesses to move out to the suburbs.

Sometimes this is done as part of a deliberate strategy to develop or rejuvenate an area. For example, the National Development and the Environment and Water Resources ministries will move to the Jurong Gateway area by 2015, along with the agencies under them.

As for park-and-ride schemes, an Asian Development Bank (ADB) report in November last year on Asian cities' parking policies pointed out that such facilities were often built in high-density places 'where park-and-ride is unlikely to be a cost-effective use of high-value space near mass transit'.

But in Singapore, many park-and-ride carparks are in residential areas, where they share space with residential carparks that would otherwise be empty in the daytime, the ADB report said.

However, Accenture's Mr **Lee** suggested that Singapore faces a 'last mile' problem with both commuters and delivery services, exacerbated by its climate.

For example, due to the hot climate, commuters are far more willing to use the MRT train if they do not have to walk too far to the station. Those who live 800m from a station take half of their trips by car on average, whereas those who live less than 200m from the MRT travel by car only a quarter of the time.

But even if transport gets greener and more convenient, said Mr **Lee**, the question remains: who pays?

Whether the Government finances public transport, or operators bear the cost or pass it on to consumers, there is no easy answer.

Professor **Lee** from NUS is in favour of government help or incentives for newer or greener buses, such as hybrid buses.

'The Government should take the lead and compose a mechanism to help or subsidise the operators,' he said.

In Hong Kong, the MTR metro network has a novel financing model: it has the rights for developing land next to train stations.

The revenue that it gets from property activities helps to fund its rail infrastructure projects, so the costs are not borne by taxpayers or commuters alone.

Such transit-oriented models should be a key part of urban planning, said researchers like Prof **Lee**.

When it comes to planning and improving infrastructure, 'public transport should undoubtedly enjoy the highest and clearest priority compared to private modes', he said.

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**SUBJECT:** CITY LIFE (90%); URBANIZATION (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (90%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (90%); CITIES (90%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (89%); ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES (86%); URBAN DEVELOPMENT (78%); ECONOMIC NEWS (78%); RESEARCH (78%); POPULATION SIZE (77%); CONSULTING SERVICES (77%); ENVIRONMENTALISM (77%); ELECTRIC VEHICLES (76%); NATURAL RESOURCES (75%); SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (74%); INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (74%); DEVELOPMENT BANKS (74%); RENEWABLE ENERGY (73%); ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT (73%); OIL & GAS CONSUMPTION (73%); LAND USE PLANNING (73%); NATURAL GAS PRODUCTS (73%); CITY GOVERNMENT (72%); AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY (71%); CONSUMPTION (70%); INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE (69%); SUBURBS (68%); INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS (68%); MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (66%);

Transit towards a greener, more accessible system The Straits Times (Singapore) January 2, 2011 Sunday

**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION** (65%); **WATER QUALITY** (50%)

**COMPANY:** ACCENTURE PLC (95%); ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (60%)

**TICKER:** ACN (NYSE) (95%); ATB (ASX) (60%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS541611 ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT & GENERAL MANAGEMENT CONSULTING SERVICES (95%); SIC8742 MANAGEMENT CONSULTING SERVICES (95%); NAICS522110 COMMERCIAL BANKING (60%); SIC6081 BRANCHES & AGENCIES OF FOREIGN BANKS (60%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SEOUL, KOREA, REPUBLIC OF (93%) SINGAPORE (98%); KOREA, REPUBLIC OF (93%); ASIA (92%)

**LOAD-DATE:** January 1, 2011

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TODAY (Singapore)

March 26, 2013 Tuesday  
APM Edition

## Divergent views on free travel issue

**BYLINE:** Tan Weizhen

**SECTION:** HNP; Singapore; Pg. 4

**LENGTH:** 430 words

SINGAPORE - Although he was still mulling over whether to increase existing discounts or make it free for commuters to take public transport before the morning rush hour, Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew said yesterday that he hoped to change the travel patterns of as much as 20 per cent of commuters who currently take public transport between 8.30am and 9.30am.

Speaking during a recording of the Channel NewsAsia programme Ask Minister - which will be aired at 8pm today - Mr Lui also noted the divergent feedback on the issue: "There is a group that is very keen for us to offer free travel and they think it's a way to show the Government is truly committed to doing all that is possible to ease congestion.

"But there is also a significant group that is cautioning me against offering free travel, because their concern is that we may (move) too many commuters to earlier hours, creating a new peak, whereas my intention is really to shift between 10 and 20 per cent of commuters."

On whether the newly revealed target was achievable - and if free travel would be the way to reach it - transport analysts TODAY spoke to said the authorities should do more studies to determine what proportion of public transport commuters can change their travel patterns without too much disruption or inconvenience to their daily routines.

National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** said: "Maybe to some, a discount of 50 cents or a dollar will change their behaviour. But for other people, they may need more ... the Government needs to test and observe the situation."

Earlier this month, Mr Lui said in Parliament that the options are to increase the current 50-cent discount for pre-peak hour travel "substantially to, say, S\$1, or to go all the way to make it free". He had also added that the authorities would achieve a "very perceptible improvement" in commuters' daily travel experience if "we can get even 10 to 15 per cent" of commuters in the peak period to travel earlier.

Currently, the Government also offers other incentives, including a chance to win S\$200. The existing incentives have moved about 3 to 4 per cent of commuters away from the peak period.

On the programme, Mr Lui was also asked whether he would consider penalising car owners so that more would utilise public transport. He said he was in favour of expanding the public transport network and making it "a lot more convenient" instead.

Mr Lui also urged aspiring car buyers to hold off purchasing until next year, when the supply of Certificates of Entitlement is expected to increase.

**SUBJECT:** TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (73%) Transport

**LOAD-DATE:** May 23, 2013

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

November 18, 2010 Thursday

## **Trams just the ticket for public transport; They offer clean, green, convenient option for commuters, say experts**

**BYLINE:** Christopher Tan, Senior Correspondent

**LENGTH:** 464 words

TRAMS, which are making a strong comeback in Europe, can be relevant in Singapore, says a prominent transport guru.

Sir Peter Hall, a professor of planning and regeneration at University College London, said: 'A tramway could be a viable alternative to automated light rail transit, as a feeder service into MRT stations.'

He was in town recently to give a talk at the invitation of the Urban Redevelopment Authority, and spoke of tramways in Germany and Sweden.

He told The Straits Times after the talk that the pros and cons of a tramway 'could be finely balanced', taking into consideration the local geography.

On arguments that trams take up extra space on the road, Sir Peter countered that trams can share surface space with other vehicles, and are less intrusive than elevated LRT tracks and stations. Being at street level, they are also more accessible.

Nanyang Technological University (NTU) adjunct associate professor Gopinath Menon, a retired Land Transport Authority (LTA) planner, said trams would suit places like the Science Park and the one-north technopark.

'Orchard Road is another place,' he said. 'A tram system there would be visually pleasing, non-polluting, silent and can carry a lot of people over short distances.'

Transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** of the National University of Singapore (NUS) said a tram system was ideal if the area was 'attractive' and flat, but would not work well in hilly terrain like that of NTU or NUS' Kent Ridge campus.

The LTA, which has studied the feasibility of trams for at least 10 years, said it remains open to the option, but no decision has been made yet.

Trams plied Singapore in the late 1800s, before being replaced by buses in the early 1900s. But modern trams are nothing like the ancient systems, and this explains their renaissance.

Transport and energy group Alstom said it has supplied more than 1,000 modern Citadis trams to 24 cities since 1997. They include Paris, Melbourne, Tunis, Algiers, Barcelona, Dublin, Madrid and Rotterdam. Several other cities plan to introduce trams in the next couple of years.

Meanwhile, students from an urban transport management masters programme conducted by UniSIM and LTA Academy recently put forth their own proposal for a tram system in Marina Bay.

Trams just the ticket for public transport; They offer clean, green, convenient option for commuters, say experts The Straits Times (Singapore) November 18, 2010 Thursday

They proposed a 5km tramway to connect the five MRT lines that will serve Marina Bay, 'to make the area the first to be served by emission-free public transport'.

'Although the tram option is costlier than buses, its benefits are enormous,' the proposal read. 'It is clean, green and comfortable. Its level of service is close to what a rail transit offers, and exceeds what buses are capable of.'

It added that this will help make the area 'walkable and liveable... and it fits the overall ambience of the district'.

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**SUBJECT:** URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (90%); URBAN RAIL SYSTEMS (90%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (90%); COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (90%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (89%); URBAN DEVELOPMENT (78%); ECONOMIC NEWS (78%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (78%); GEOGRAPHY (74%)

**COMPANY:** ALSTOM SA (53%)

**TICKER:** ALO (PAR) (53%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS483111 DEEP SEA FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION (53%); NAICS482111 LINE-HAUL RAILROADS (53%); NAICS221121 ELECTRIC BULK POWER TRANSMISSION & CONTROL (53%); SIC4911 ELECTRIC SERVICES (53%); SIC4412 DEEP SEA FOREIGN TRANSPORTATION OF FREIGHT (53%); SIC4011 RAILROADS, LINE-HAUL OPERATING (53%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE (94%); BARCELONA, SPAIN (79%) HENAN, CHINA (57%); CATALONIA, SPAIN (52%) SINGAPORE (94%); EUROPE (92%); NETHERLANDS (79%); GERMANY (58%); CENTRAL EUROPE (58%); CHINA (57%)

**LOAD-DATE:** November 17, 2010

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

52 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Business Times Singapore

December 22, 2011 Thursday

## SMRT to try out higher speeds, use more trains

**BYLINE:** Lynn Kan

**SECTION:** COMPANIES & MARKETS; Singapore Companies

**LENGTH:** 558 words

MRT commuters who have stayed away because of the slower and less frequent service after two major train disruptions have some reason to hop back on board.

Last night, SMRT announced it will try upping train speeds over the 'next few days' beyond their current 40km/h along sensitive areas of the railway network where floating slab tracks are installed.

These floating slab tracks on sections of the North South and East West Lines help absorb vibrations from passing trains and prevent nearby buildings from being affected.

Depending on the trial results, the Land Transport Authority (LTA) and SMRT will consider upping the speed restriction to 60 km/h, said LTA in a press statement yesterday night.

Moreover, there will be more trains in service. SMRT has repaired and will re-introduce 11 out of the 13 trains - found damaged on Sunday morning checks - into service.

Two of the remaining trains are still awaiting replacement parts.

Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew said on Facebook yesterday the larger number of working trains helped SMRT run trains at 'intervals very close to what it was before the two major incidents last week.'

Last week, train operator SMRT met with its biggest train crisis in its 24-year operating history.

Two major breakdowns on Thursday and Saturday left 127,000 and 94,000 commuters respectively stranded.

SMRT said then the problem stemmed from misaligned collector shoes on trains, which feed power to the trains, and a damaged third-rail, a power supply parallel to the main tracks.

The repeated breakdowns prompted Prime Minister **Lee** Hsien Loong to call for a committee of inquiry to look into the root causes of the disruptions.

Yesterday's statement by the LTA did not make conclusive remarks about what caused the train breakdowns.

However, both LTA and SMRT are looking at how to enhance the design of the third rail and how to rectify dislodged 'claws' that grip and support it.

For the moment, daily inspections of the third rail and main tracks have found no visible damage so far.

As an added precaution, the claws have been secured with cable ties, and SMRT is getting engineers to replace them with a more permanent solution.

It is likely that until the committee is convened and their findings released, reasons underlying the faults will be for the moment unanswered.

But, Mr Lui said last Sunday: 'There is now some indication that we ought to focus more of our attention and analysis on the floating slab track.'

LTA and SMRT employees on early morning Sunday checks of the tracks found 21 dislodged or fallen claws, which are placed at regular intervals on the third rail to stabilise it. Most of them were clustered along areas where floating slab tracks are present.

If it turns out floating slab tracks are unable to fully absorb vibrations from passing MRT trains, and contributed to MRT breakdowns last week, fixing the problem could be long-drawn.

The floating slab structures may need to be reinforced or reinstalled, which could cause further inconvenience to commuters.

'That would not be a straight forward process. It cannot be done within a few hours. Retrofitting the tracks would be highly disruptive to train services,' said transport researcher at the National University of Singapore, Associate Professor **Lee Der Horng**.

SMRT's share price yesterday was unchanged at \$1.755.

**SUBJECT:** TRAINS (90%); INVESTIGATIONS (89%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (78%); INSPECTIONS (73%); SPEED LIMITS (72%); INTERNET SOCIAL NETWORKING (71%); PRIME MINISTERS (50%)

**COMPANY:** FACEBOOK INC (55%)

**TICKER:** FB (NASDAQ) (55%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS519130 INTERNET PUBLISHING & BROADCASTING & WEB SEARCH PORTALS (55%)

**PERSON:** **LEE** HSIEN LOONG (51%)

**LOAD-DATE:** December 21, 2011

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

53 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

January 18, 2011 Tuesday

## **More book taxis in stronger economy; Operators report hike in 2010 as people are more willing to pay extra fees**

**BYLINE:** Chong Zi Liang

**LENGTH:** 461 words

THE number of passengers choosing to book a taxi instead of flagging one down soared last year compared to previous years.

The two taxi operators with the largest fleets in Singapore both reported a steep spike in the number of bookings they handled last year.

Leading the pack was transport operator ComfortDelGro, with 24 million taxi bookings last year, a 37 per cent jump from 17.5 million bookings in 2009. It is a record high for the company, which first launched the service in 1996.

ComfortDelGro has more than 15,000 taxis.

TransCab, the taxi operator with the second-largest fleet at about 3,800 taxis, managed 300,385 bookings last year. That is double the number of bookings it received in 2009.

Even smaller players have had an increase. Premier Taxis, with a fleet of 2,000 taxis, witnessed a relatively modest jump of more than 20 per cent last year compared to 2006.

Industry insiders pointed to a strong economic recovery as one possible explanation for the significant jump in the number of taxi bookings as passengers feel less of a pinch parting with an extra charge of \$2.50 or \$3.50, depending on the time of booking.

Underwriter Ingrid Poh, 27, has recently started booking taxis more instead of flagging them down, especially in the morning when she is rushing to work.

'The extra cost of booking a taxi is insignificant if someone is sharing the taxi with me or I am late,' she said.

With more commuters willing to spend on taxi rides, it naturally pushes bookings up.

Indeed, figures from the Land Transport Authority showed an average of about 913,000 daily passenger trips in the first 10 months of last year.

In 2009, there were only 864,000 taxi trips made each day.

But increased taxi usage does not explain why ComfortDelGro is able to dominate the field in terms of bookings.

Instead, it seems the company's maintenance of a fleet more than three times larger than that of

More book taxis in stronger economy; Operators report hike in 2010 as people are more willing to pay extra fees The Straits Times (Singapore) January 18, 2011 Tuesday

second-placed TransCab has paid off handsomely.

Passengers prefer ComfortDelGro because it is able to dispatch taxis to passengers quicker than other companies, said transport researcher **Lee Der Horng**.

'Last week, I asked a class of 30 students which taxi booking number they remember, and almost everyone could only remember ComfortDelGro's,' said the associate professor at the National University of Singapore.

Looking ahead, Prof **Lee** expects taxi ridership, and by extension, taxi bookings, to continue climbing due to the recent high Certificate of Entitlement prices which would deter potential car buyers.

'Car drivers and taxi passengers overlap to a certain extent in terms of income, travelling time and comfort level expectations,' he said.

'So they are more likely to turn to taxis instead of trains or buses for an alternative mode of transport.'

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**SUBJECT:** ECONOMIC CONDITIONS (78%); TRAINS (73%); ECONOMIC RECOVERY (72%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (65%)

**COMPANY:** COMFORTDELGRO CORP LTD (58%)

**TICKER:** C52 (SGX) (58%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS485310 TAXI SERVICE (58%); NAICS485210 INTERURBAN & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (58%); SIC4131 INTERCITY & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (58%); SIC4121 TAXICABS (58%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (93%)

**LOAD-DATE:** January 17, 2011

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

54 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

December 8, 2010 Wednesday

## **100 mishaps a day on expressways; Number is up 40% from three years ago; most cause only 20-min delay**

**BYLINE:** Christopher Tan, Senior Correspondent

**LENGTH:** 726 words

SINGAPORE'S expressways are the scene of no fewer than 100 traffic-disrupting incidents - mainly accidents and breakdowns - a day.

This is up 40per cent from three years ago, the Land Transport Authority (LTA) said.

It attributed the rise to the presence of more vehicles (943,000, up 10.7per cent), more expressways (160km, up 5.2per cent) and wider coverage by its Expressway Monitoring and Advisory System (Emas) which detects expressway incidents.

The daily occurrences are a cause for worry because they slow down traffic considerably.

Dr Chin Kian Keong, LTA group director for road operation, said a single accident or breakdown can halve an expressway's 6,000-an-hour capacity.

An LTA spokesman said more than 85per cent of incidents are cleared with less than 20 minutes' delay to motorists.

Still, the figure of 100 a day surprised retired traffic planner Joseph Yee, who said: 'It is quite a high number, considering that there are only about 160km of expressways.

'Traffic density has gone up, but speeds have remained about the same, so people must be getting more reckless.'

The LTA does not break down incidents by vehicle types, but in the first nine months of this year, 2,400 summonses were issued to heavy-vehicle drivers, up from 1,500 over the same period last year.

In total, the Traffic Police issue more than 200,000 summonses a year, mostly for speeding.

Associate Professor Wong Yiik Diew, who teaches road transportation at Nanyang Technological University, said an influx of newcomers, who are not familiar with Singapore's roads, might also have had an effect on the 'road culture'.

'You just have to have a few drivers who are either more risk-averse or risk-perverse to upset the balance,' he said.

He also said new drivers - sparked by an abundant supply of certificates of entitlement, averaging more than 100,000 a year between 2004 and 2008 - could be a contributing factor. 'Their road craft may not be as polished,' he said.

But the view of motoring enthusiast and one-time race driver **Lee** Chiu San, 64, is that motorists in Singapore

100 mishaps a day on expressways; Number is up 40% from three years ago; most cause only 20-min delay  
The Straits Times (Singapore) December 8, 2010 Wednesday

generally have poor driving attitudes.

To ensure a smooth flow of traffic, the LTA's Intelligent Transport Systems Centre monitors expressways round the clock.

When an incident is detected, its Emas recovery crew and traffic marshals arrive within 15 minutes, or eight minutes if the disruption is in a tunnel.

Transport experts said the frequency of incidents can be minimised with the three Es - education, engineering and enforcement.

Automobile Association of Singapore chief executive **Lee** Wai Mun is lobbying for the driver-training syllabus to include a compulsory module on expressway driving.

At present, only those who have passed the driving test can sign up for optional expressway lessons.

Road users reckon highways could also be better designed to reduce incidents. 'Expressways should have fewer entrances and exits. The more you have, the more accidents you will see because there are so many crossover points,' said Dr George Caldwell, an 85-year-old medical practitioner who studied transport engineering.

He said it does not matter that drivers will end up having to drive a bit more to get to where they want to go. 'Short cuts are for pedestrians, not for motorists,' he noted.

Transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** of the National University of Singapore concurs, citing the Central Expressway (CTE) - before its ongoing widening - as an expressway with an 'old and obsolete design' that contributed to a not-so-smooth traffic flow.

He noted, too, that Singapore's land scarcity has led to shorter merging and diverging lanes on expressways.

While the LTA has no record of where exactly most expressway incidents occur, it has embarked on a major project to address a common complaint about bottlenecks caused by vehicles entering and exiting the CTE.

It is widening the expressway and building two flyovers.

One will allow northbound motorists exiting the Pan-Island Expressway to continue their journey on the CTE without encountering those on the CTE and using the Braddell exit.

Another flyover will offer city-bound motorists headed for the exit to Changi and Serangoon an elevated drive. This will keep them away from city-bound drivers entering the highway from Braddell Road a few hundred metres before this exit.

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Call to make L-drivers go on expressways, Singapore

**SUBJECT:** VEHICLE TRAFFIC (89%); DRIVER BEHAVIOR (88%); POLICE FORCES (77%); ENGINEERING (69%); CURRICULA (69%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (69%); AUTO RACING (65%); LOBBYING (64%); CAR ENTHUSIASTS (60%); DRIVER EDUCATION (53%); INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEMS (50%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** HENAN, CHINA (55%) SINGAPORE (94%); CHINA (55%)

**LOAD-DATE:** December 7, 2010

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

100 mishaps a day on expressways; Number is up 40% from three years ago; most cause only 20-min delay  
The Straits Times (Singapore) December 8, 2010 Wednesday

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

August 5, 2011 Friday

## **All a matter of timing; LTA should focus on improving bus frequency, say analysts**

**BYLINE:** Royston Sim & Amanda Tan

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 702 words

TACKLING the problem of irregular bus arrival times would go a long way towards solving Singapore's public bus woes, say transport analysts.

They suggested that the Land Transport Authority (LTA) focus on this area in its ongoing review of public bus service standards.

To do so, they said, the LTA must identify transport corridors that see the highest demand and try to improve frequency and reliability there.

They also felt that on top of adding capacity to the bus system, other measures such as greater bus priority and demand management must be considered.

In a Facebook posting on Wednesday, Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew said he has asked the LTA to complete a comprehensive review of what is known as bus Quality of Service standards by the fourth quarter of this year, and to come up with a 'robust plan of action'.

Transport consultant Tham Chen Munn said that to produce a truly comprehensive review, the LTA must first do detailed data mining.

It will need to take raw trip data from ez-link cards that passengers use to pay their fares, process it and use those statistics to see if a particular bus route is truly crowded.

These statistics would show exact bus frequencies, and which legs of a particular bus route are most burdened, he said.

'The first thing is to make sense of the data, then focus on how to improve the future of public transport,' he said.

Associate Professor **Lee Der Horng**, a National University of Singapore (NUS) transport researcher, said the key is to look into ensuring regular bus arrivals at bus stops.

He noted that even if a bus is dispatched every 10 minutes, variables such as traffic conditions would cause hiccups in bus intervals.

He called for buses to be given higher priority on the roads, as with bus lanes, to ensure smoother journeys with more predictable timings.

Transport economist Michael Li of the Nanyang Business School suggested that planners look at

All a matter of timing; LTA should focus on improving bus frequency, say analysts The Straits Times (Singapore) August 5, 2011 Friday

overlapping certain bus routes, so people have options to take more than one bus service.

Demand must also be managed, Dr Li believes. Working hours can be staggered, or incentives created for companies to practise telecommuting.

Associate Professor Chin Hoong Chor from the NUS civil engineering department said sufficient capacity to meet demand is necessary if there is to be consistency in waiting time.

To that end, the recent move to extend the lifespan of buses is a good short-term solution, he said.

Mr Charles Chong, who sits on the Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport, said people want to see bus networks expanded to include some areas which are currently left out, such as around private estates.

Predictability and frequency of bus arrivals also need to be improved, especially during peak periods, said Mr Chong, the MP for Joo Chiat.

'Commuters complain that sometimes they wait 15 minutes, then a few buses come at the same time,' he said.

Ultimately, though, commuters' mindsets must change, said Mr Tham. Improvements in service standards will lead to higher expectations, and complaints will arise again when these are not met, he said.

For example, feeder bus services have attracted many complaints. But, said Mr Tham: 'People complain about waiting 20 minutes for the feeder bus to come, and taking another 20 minutes to reach the MRT station. But often they could have simply taken eight minutes to walk there.'

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## **QUALITY CONTROL**

**Since August 2009, bus operators have had to adhere to more stringent standards set by the Public Transport Council (PTC), which reviews the performance of operators every six months and metes out financial penalties when these Quality of Service standards are not met.**

**1** Operating Performance Standards ensure, among other things, that buses run on schedule, passenger loads during weekday peak periods on each service do not exceed 95 per cent daily, and that accident rates are low.

**2** Service Provision Standards ensure, among other things, that buses operate at least 18 hours daily unless otherwise stated, at least one bus service is available at 6am or earlier and after the last trains, and up-to-date information is provided such as bus timetables.

**SUBJECT:** MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (93%); INDUSTRY ANALYSTS (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (90%); TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (90%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (77%); BUSINESS EDUCATION (75%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (73%); DATA MINING (72%); INTERNET SOCIAL NETWORKING (70%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (69%); ENGINEERING (66%); TELECOMMUTING (64%)

**COMPANY:** FACEBOOK INC (57%)

**TICKER:** FB (NASDAQ) (57%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS519130 INTERNET PUBLISHING & BROADCASTING & WEB SEARCH PORTALS (57%)

All a matter of timing; LTA should focus on improving bus frequency, say analysts The Straits Times  
(Singapore) August 5, 2011 Friday

**GEOGRAPHIC:** HENAN, CHINA (53%) SINGAPORE (93%); CHINA (53%)

**LOAD-DATE:** August 4, 2011

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** In addition to adding capacity to the bus system, the Land Transport Authority must also consider other measures such as greater bus priority and demand management, say transport analysts. -- ST FILE PHOTO

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

November 21, 2012 Wednesday

## **Sales of diesel cars set to zoom; Tax rebates, which kick in next year, expected to be a big draw**

**BYLINE:** Christopher Tan Senior Correspondent

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 742 words

CAR buyers are likely to warm to diesel models quickly when the new Carbon Emissions-based Vehicle Scheme (CEVS) kicks in in January, industry observers say.

But whether the sales of such models will surpass petrol car sales - as is now the case in Europe - depends on ownership experiences and government policies over the longer term.

Mr Klaus Landhaeusser, South-east Asian external affairs manager of German automotive group Bosch, estimates that diesel models - which typically emit 20 per cent to 30 per cent less carbon dioxide (CO2) than petrol equivalents - will make up 10 per cent to 15 per cent of new car sales "within the next few years".

"If you look at Indonesia, the market share rose from zero to 16 per cent in the first year," Mr Landhaeusser said, citing a change when Jakarta introduced high-quality diesel - necessary for modern cars - two years ago.

Singapore's CEVS grants tax rebates ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000 for new cars that emit no more than 160g of CO2 per kilometre from January.

From next July, new cars that produce more than 210g of CO2 per km will attract surcharges of \$5,000 to \$20,000.

In addition, diesel cars that meet the Euro V emission standard - met by most European cars already - will have their annual Special Diesel Tax slashed to 40 cents per cubic centimetre (cc) of engine displacement.

This is down from the \$1.25 per cc for Euro IV diesel cars.

In the first 10 months of this year, diesel cars - mainly Jaguars and Land Rovers - made up 1.3 per cent of new car sales in Singapore, up from 0.7 per cent last year and 0.2 per cent in 2010.

Dr **Lee Der Horng**, a transport researcher at the National University of Singapore (NUS), said diesel models are likely to become more popular than hybrid models.

Hybrids, together with compressed natural gas (CNG) and electric cars, currently attract a 40 per cent tax break, regardless of their carbon emissions.

Dr **Lee** said the higher availability of diesel models alone will propel their sales ahead of hybrids.

Volkswagen, for instance, has announced that it will have 11 diesel models by next month. Its European rivals such as Audi, BMW and Mercedes-Benz will bring in diesel models next year, followed by the South

Sales of diesel cars set to zoom; Tax rebates, which kick in next year, expected to be a big draw The Straits Times (Singapore) November 21, 2012 Wednesday

Koreans.

The Japanese makes may do so in the next three years, if at all.

Mr Klaus Redomske, marketing director of Toyota agent Borneo Motors, said: "We will focus on our existing products, which include the Prius, Prius C and Lexus CT200h hybrids, which are our CEVS champions."

He said Toyota believes petrol- electric hybrids are more environmentally friendly, especially in the urban context.

Dr **Lee** of NUS agreed. "For Singapore to be environmentally friendly, perhaps we should be more comprehensive, and not just consider carbon emissions alone," he said, adding that other pollutants, such as particulate matter, should also be weighed.

He said the Euro standards, on which the CEVS is based, are "derived from the European driving environment... but in Singapore, driving conditions are very different, so the pollutant profile of vehicles is also different".

The Straits Times understands the CEVS is likely to be enhanced in the future to encourage more consumers to opt for greener cars.

For instance, its current neutral band of 161g per km to 210g per km of CO<sub>2</sub>, where neither rebate nor surcharge applies, covers nearly two-thirds of cars sold here. This band could be narrowed.

Observers say a more holistic approach is needed for any environmental initiative to work well.

Borneo Motors' Mr Redomske said for instance, certificate of entitlement (COE) categories can be "more aligned with the CEVS".

In today's system, a car like the Toyota Prius, which qualifies for the maximum \$20,000 CEVS rebate, is in COE Category B (cars above 1,600cc), where premiums are \$15,000 to \$20,000 higher than Category A (cars up to 1,600cc).

Automobile Association of Singapore chief executive **Lee** Wai Mun called for policy "consistency", saying: "There needs to be a sustained process... not just the initial tax breaks."

He cited the short-lived popularity of CNG cars as "not a good sign".

Sales of such cars have slowed to a crawl, and several owners are removing gas kits from their vehicles because of a new duty on the fuel and an expiring tax concession for CNG cars.

The Government said it found that CNG cars were not "significantly cleaner" than petrol cars.

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TAXI COMPANIES TRY OUT NEW MODELS: SINGAPORE

**SUBJECT:** AUTOMOTIVE SALES (91%); VEHICLE EMISSIONS (90%); EMISSIONS (90%); GREENHOUSE GASES (90%); TAXES & TAXATION (90%); TAX LAW (90%); TAX RELIEF (90%); HYBRID VEHICLES (89%); MOTOR VEHICLES (89%); COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS (79%); AUTOMOTIVE FUELS (79%); VEHICLE EMISSIONS STANDARDS (79%); ALTERNATIVE FUEL VEHICLES (79%); AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY (79%); DIESEL FUEL (78%); FUEL TAX (78%); MARKET SHARE (75%); ELECTRIC VEHICLES (74%); AIR QUALITY REGULATION (73%); ENVIRONMENTAL LAW (73%); PUBLIC POLICY (71%); NATURAL GAS PRODUCTS (66%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** JAKARTA, INDONESIA (56%) SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA (92%); SINGAPORE (91%); GERMANY (91%); EUROPE (90%); ASIA (90%); INDONESIA (79%)

Sales of diesel cars set to zoom; Tax rebates, which kick in next year, expected to be a big draw The Straits Times (Singapore) November 21, 2012 Wednesday

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Channel NewsAsia

February 17, 2012 Friday 8:33 AM GMT

## Budget: Govt to boost bus capacity

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 467 words

SINGAPORE: The government is helping bus operators grow their fleet.

In the immediate five years, the government will fund 550 buses while public bus operators will add another 250 buses.

The move will raise bus capacity by 20 per cent by 2016.

Today, about six in 10 passenger trips are made on buses.

But there're growing complaints about reliability and congestion.

The government's move is said to be significant, given that it took operators close to 20 years to grow the public fleet by 800 buses in the past.

With the new added capacity, commuters can expect buses to have better frequencies.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Tharman Shanmugaratnam said: "This significant increase in bus capacity will reduce crowding and waiting times.

"For example, it will enable almost all feeder buses to run every 10 minutes or less, for two hours during morning and evening peak periods, instead of a one-hour peak currently."

Government Parliamentary Committee (GPC) Chair for Transport Cedric Foo said: "I think it's an excellent short-term measure. while we work on the signalling system upgrade, while we work on adding more trains.

"The overcrowding issue is a commonly heard one. So by funding the PTO, the bus companies fund 550 buses within the next five years -- it's a big step forward, and I think commuters will take very well to it."

One commuter said: "If you increase frequency of buses, it might just help a little bit but at the end of the day, if there's still a lot of traffic on the road, it's not going to help much."

National University of Singapore Department of Civil Engineering Associate Professor **Lee Der-Horng** said: "This is probably the first time in history, that the government is providing government funding to the public transport operators to boost the capacity.

"It is the intervention by the government to help the public transport operators to further advance the sufficient provision in the public transport capacity.

"We are trying to increase the public transportation demand to get more people to take the public transport, but at the same time, we also need to consider whether we have the sufficient capacity to provide, to respond to this emerging and the increasing public transportation demand, so the intervention or the

assistance from the government is very timely." Assoc Prof **Lee** said for the true benefits to be realised, there's the need to overcome the current manpower challenge and introduce more bus priority measures.

Mr Tharman noted that creating a reliable and convenient public transport is critical to to the liveability of the city and daily life for the majority of Singaporeans.

He added beyond this one-time commitment, the viability of bus operations will have to rest on improvements in efficiency and a sustainable system of fare revenues.

**SUBJECT:** MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (93%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (90%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (89%); BUDGETS (88%); HEADS OF STATE & GOVERNMENT (78%); PRIME MINISTERS (73%); RAIL TRAFFIC CONTROL (71%); PUBLIC FINANCE AGENCIES & TREASURIES (69%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (68%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (67%)

**LOAD-DATE:** February 17, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

58 of 190 DOCUMENTS

Channel NewsAsia

December 16, 2011 Friday 3:02 PM GMT

## **SMRT needs to improve technical operations, communications: Seng Han Thong**

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 355 words

**DATELINE:** SINGAPORE

The deputy chairman of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport, Seng Han Thong, has said that SMRT needs to improve its technical operations as well as its public communications.

This is to ensure the safety of commuters.

Mr Seng said there should be a comprehensive backup system in place to deal with emergencies.

He urged the Land Transport Authority to conduct routine maintenances thoroughly and to submit an audit report.

He also wants to see a list of recommendations put up by the expert team tasked to review Singapore's rail network.

Mr Seng said: "We can come to a conclusion that though SMRT has carried out many emergency preparedness exercises, obviously it is inadequate when such incidents happen. It is the fault of our power rail.

"And looking back within a year, there were eight incidents at the Circle Line and now 17 incidents at this North-South and North-East and South-West line.

"Really, the whole operation, the whole technical operating system, should be reviewed thoroughly. And from this incident, we also noted that the public communication system is not adequate to address issues like this".

Channel NewsAsia also spoke to an expert on how a misalignment of the power rail could have happened.

One reason given is that there could have been underlying problems that had not been identified.

Dr **Lee Der-Horng**, associate professor at National University of Singapore's Department of Civil Engineering, said: "One is on the hardware, on the infrastructure, whether we are providing the timely and the necessary maintenance.

"Everyone knows that in the recent years, our population has grown and the ridership has grown but at the same time, are we ensuring that the proper maintenance is in place.

"The coordination between the public transport operators like the SBS Transit and the SMRT is very necessary. But luckily, the two public transport operators are at the same time operating MRT, bus and taxi services.

SMRT needs to improve technical operations, communications: Seng Han Thong Channel NewsAsia  
December 16, 2011 Friday 3:02 PM GMT

"So I hope that the regulators, including the Public Transport Council, Land Transport Authority as well as SMRT and SBS can all come into the picture to work out a proper reaction plan".

**SUBJECT:** PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (89%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (89%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (89%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (78%); ENGINEERING (73%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (73%); AUDITS (71%); POPULATION GROWTH (70%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (50%); TAXICABS & LIMOUSINES (50%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (94%)

**LOAD-DATE:** December 16, 2011

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**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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The Business Times Singapore

November 9, 2011 Wednesday

## **Smoothing the bumps in the COE system; Motor traders address issues in current system, submit paper to ministry**

**BYLINE:** Samuel Ee

**SECTION:** THE NEWS; Top Print Edition Stories

**LENGTH:** 700 words

(SINGAPORE) The Motor Traders Association of Singapore (MTA) has given its take on COEs and the Vehicle Quota System (VQS) to the government, saying that the current format spells 'feast or famine' for traders.

MTA president Cheah Kim Teck says that car distributors accept that the VQS is here to stay, and that they 'respect the idea of managing congestion'.

'In a way, we cannot expect more COEs,' he says, referring to certificates of entitlement which are required for registering new cars. 'But all we are asking is, is there any other way to skin this cat'

The COE quota has been reduced significantly over the past three years and this has affected vehicle sales by MTA members. Most of Singapore's authorised car distributors belong to the MTA.

The COE quota is largely based on vehicle deregistrations, which Mr Cheah expects to shoot up in 3-4 years' time when a potential 200,000 cars reach scrappable age - thus expanding the COE quota.

He says that when these new COEs come onstream, distributors will grow their business to meet the new demand, only to scale back and retrench staff when the quota is cut later.

'So it's feast or famine if we continue with this replacement method,' he says. 'But if we can smoothen it out, we will have a steady market and avoid the peaks and troughs.'

In the paper to the Ministry of Transport, which MTA co-wrote with National University of Singapore professor **Lee Der-Horng**, the first issue highlights VQS fluctuations and one section, among others, looks at the cap on the annual vehicle population growth rate.

The rate will be cut from the current 1.5 per cent for the first half of quota year 2012 to 0.5 per cent for the second half.

The MTA paper asks whether there is an urgent need to lower the rate, given that proposed road works - such as the upgrading of the Outer Ring Road System, the construction of the 3.6 km Marina Coastal Expressway and road widening of the Central Expressway - would lead to the road network capacity increasing by more than the time-averaged 0.5 per cent growth as stated by the Land Transport Authority.

The second issue concerns the merging of COE Categories A, B and E, and applying ad valorem bidding.

Smoothing the bumps in the COE system; Motor traders address issues in current system, submit paper to ministry The Business Times Singapore November 9, 2011 Wednesday

The separate categories were created so as to serve different customer segments with varying price sensitivities and purchasing powers. But the MTA says that empirical evidence has shown that the VQS categorisation may not always be effective in achieving this stated equity objective because in practice, buyers of small cars, ie Cat A, have been paying more in relative and sometimes absolute terms compared with buyers of the more expensive Cat B cars.

As for implementing an ad valorem bidding scheme where bids are the percentages of the Open Market Values (OMV) of the cars, the argument is that buyers of larger cars will always pay a higher absolute amount of COE premium regardless of the economic conditions.

But MTA points out that a potential loophole of this scheme is possible - under- declaration of OMV by unscrupulous car importers.

The third issue that the MTA brought up in the paper relates to taxis, which have been blamed for pushing up Cat A premiums.

Instead of recommending that a separate COE category be created for them (to avoid the possibility of collusion among the seven taxi companies), the MTA proposes that the PQP, or prevailing quota premium, be paid for new taxis amounting to a ceiling of 3 per cent of their current fleet size.

This figure is chosen to reflect the average year- on-year growth rate of the taxi population from 2000 to 2010.

The final issue raised by the MTA concerns the creation of a COE category for green vehicles to reduce the upfront costs of green vehicles and encourage greater public adoption of these less pollutive vehicles.

This is because even with the current GVR or green vehicle rebate, the MTA says, a hybrid version still costs more than its conventional petrol-engined variant.

'The whole subject of COE seems to be a sacred cow,' says Mr Cheah. 'But we thought that after the general elections, the mood is right to bring it up because we need to be consultative and hear everybody out to make this a better place.'

**SUBJECT:** MOTOR VEHICLE WHOLESALERS (90%); ROAD & BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION (85%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (78%); AUTOMOTIVE SALES (78%); CATS (74%); MOTOR VEHICLES (73%); HIGHWAYS & STREETS (66%); MARKET SEGMENTATION (64%); ROAD & BRIDGE MAINTENANCE (61%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (50%)

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**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (95%)

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

July 16, 2012 Monday

## 'School buses for adults' a hit with office workers

**BYLINE:** ROYSTON SIM

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 455 words

THE latest bus pooling service to hit the road here has turned out to be a runaway success.

Estatebuzz, which runs the service through its ShareTransport.sg website, has in just four months introduced six 13-seater buses to ferry office workers from their housing estates to the city.

Launched in March, ShareTransport aims to offer an alternative transport option for riders who want a more direct route than what buses and the MRT offer, but cheaper than taxis.

Demand for the service has been strong, said Estatebuzz chief executive Moh Hon Meng, 43, who describes his service as a 'school bus for adults'.

Said Mr Moh: 'It's popular because the buses are customised according to the passengers on board. We pick passengers up at the places that they live and drop them off at their work buildings.'

ShareTransport charters its buses from bus operators but lets its users suggest routes. Currently, the service connects residents in Choa Chu Kang, Bukit Panjang, and Woodlands, to areas such as Shenton Way and Pasir Panjang.

Each passenger pays between \$95 and \$110 a month, or about \$4.50 to \$5 a day.

Mr Moh said he may start an evening service soon, and expects to run about 50 buses in all by the end of this year.

Finance manager Vejaya Letchumi, 52, takes the service from Choa Chu Kang to her Beach Road office. Her journey time is now about 30 minutes, down from an hour or so when she takes a public bus or the MRT.

She said: 'Now I can get to work on time. The MRT has occasional delays, while the buses are crowded and get caught in traffic.'

'This option takes the most direct route and can avoid areas with traffic jams.'

Several operators have tried bus pooling but with mixed success. One bus pooling provider that is doing well is Smartbus, which operates 25 services from different locations to Changi Business Park. Its managing director Saritha Bondili, 33, said demand for buses has been going up.

But even as such pooling services become popular, it is unlikely to lead to less congestion on public buses, said associate professor **Lee Der Horng**, a transport researcher at the National University of Singapore.

'School buses for adults' a hit with office workers The Straits Times (Singapore) July 16, 2012 Monday

Bus pooling is also unlikely to become widely available due to the limited number of private buses, which are in high demand, he added.

Last year, more than 5,000 school and private hire buses were in operation here.

Prof **Lee** said the demand for such services shows that people still want good public transport, and seek bus services that are comfortable, reliable and affordable.

'Hopefully, the authorities and public transport operators will receive this message and work along these lines to improve service.'

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**SUBJECT:** MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (91%); SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION (90%); MOTOR VEHICLES (90%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (89%); SCHOOL & EMPLOYEE BUS SERVICES (89%); EXECUTIVES (89%); VEHICLE TRAFFIC (78%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (65%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (92%)

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TODAY (Singapore)

July 19, 2013 Friday  
APM Edition

## Nature Society proposes alternative route for Cross Island Line

**BYLINE:** Neo Chai Chin

**SECTION:** HNP; Singapore; Editors Pick; Pg. 4

**LENGTH:** 590 words

SINGAPORE - The Nature Society (Singapore) (NSS) has opposed the future Cross Island MRT Line cutting through nature reserves and has proposed an alternative route that cuts southwards via Lornie Road around the reserve.

In a 39-page position paper posted on its website yesterday, the NSS said nature reserves "should not be treated as vacant State Land available to be used for the convenience of transport infrastructure or other purposes". Design authorities should include the value of ecosystems in cost-benefit analyses in the same way they would consider the cost of private property acquisition, the paper stated.

Plans for a 50km Cross Island Line were announced by the Government in January this year, where the underground line was depicted to cut through the Central Catchment Nature Reserve near MacRitchie Reservoir.

The alignment cuts directly under primary forest and regrowth forests over a century old, according to maps in the position paper. The NSS said its concerns relate to the degradation of forest habitats from soil investigation and related engineering works that will be required above-ground. Surface works are expected to result in forest clearance, compaction of soil along the rail line's alignment, toxic material spillage and siltation that will seriously damage one of the two most pristine stream ecosystems in the reserve.

The society's proposed alternate route will add 1.7km to 2km to the Cross Island Line, and an estimated four minutes' additional travel time. It would present an opportunity to serve residents near Adam Road and visitors to the MacRitchie Reservoir Park, it said.

"We believe four minutes is not too much to ask for conserving probably the most pristine part of our nature reserve," said Mr Tony O'Dempsey, an NSS council member and the society's spokesperson on this issue.

Transport analyst and civil engineering don **Lee Der Horng** said a straight rail line is better and cheaper from the engineering and operations point of view. He noted the "big curvature" in the proposed route going around the nature reserve, but was supportive of it. "If this reserve is important to us ... I think a certain judgment must be put in place and it shouldn't be just based on transport," he said.

Nature Society proposes alternative route for Cross Island Line TODAY (Singapore) July 19, 2013 Friday

Professor Leung Chun Fai of the National University of Singapore's Civil and Environmental Engineering Department said "it may still be possible to construct the tunnels along the original proposed route without disturbing the nature reserve, but this must be examined in detail".

Effects of soil investigation and tunnelling works should be studied to see if they are "indeed manageable and very small". Once sub-surface properties are determined, engineers can evaluate if modern tunnelling techniques would disturb the reserve. The fallout from any tunnelling accidents must also be evaluated. The same should be done for alternatives if the original route is proven unfeasible, he said.

The NSS submitted its paper to the Land Transport Authority (LTA) last week.

In response to TODAY's queries, an LTA spokesperson said "the alignment of the Cross Island Line has not been decided, and no decision will be made until after an Environmental Impact Assessment has been conducted". Any decision made will aim to safeguard Singapore's nature reserves, "even as we seek to meet the infrastructure development needs of Singaporeans".

Nature groups including the NSS met the LTA last month and took a group of officials including Minister of State (Transport) Josephine Teo on a walk in the reserve last week.

**SUBJECT:** FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS (90%); ECOSYSTEMS & HABITATS (90%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (89%); TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (89%); ENGINEERING (89%); INVESTIGATIONS (87%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (78%); FORESTS & WOODLANDS (78%); TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE (76%); LAND DEGRADATION (71%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (60%); TUNNEL CONSTRUCTION (60%); BRIDGES & TUNNELS (50%) Environment; Transport

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (95%)

**LOAD-DATE:** July 19, 2013

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**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

January 3, 2013 Thursday

## River taxi service yet to make a splash

**BYLINE:** melissa lin

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 457 words

THEY are meant to give ordinary commuters a more scenic route to work.

But the new river taxis did not seem to be making much of a splash with Singaporeans yesterday.

When The Straits Times took a ride on the first working day since the Jan 1 launch, the handful of passengers on the boat were all tourists.

The taxis - which ferry people to spots along the Singapore River - are targeting those who live and work in the area.

Singapore River Explorer - one of the two firms operating them - said it is still "working on getting the lunch crowd".

Its operations director, Mr Terence Ng, added that the company plans to attract more passengers by introducing tie-ups with restaurants at various landing spots.

"It'll be like how there are shuttle buses to malls," he said.

Landing points along the river are marked by white tents that sell tickets for two routes. Passengers can either travel along Jiak Kim Street to Clifford Pier for \$3 one way, or around the Marina Bay area for \$4. Both are loop services.

Unlike the wooden bumboats often seen cruising the river, the new Bubble Jet craft has a glass exterior, spacious sofa seats and air-conditioning. When this reporter hopped onto one, however, the air-con barely managed to keep out the afternoon heat. The ride from Raffles Place to Fort Canning lasted about 10 minutes.

Behind the scenes, the crew work as a team, using walkie-talkies to make sure staff are on hand at each point to receive the boats and tie them to the shore in strong winds.

But it seems that more is needed to lure Singaporeans on board. Financial controller Teo Qiu Gui, who works in the area, told The Straits Times he had not heard of the service.

"I might take a ride on it out of novelty," said Mr Teo, 29. "But not on a regular basis as it costs more than regular public transport and I imagine it would be slower too."

National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** thinks Singapore has not reached the stage where the land transportation system is so bad that people would rather opt for river taxis.

"I can't say that there's no attraction (for the river taxis), but it's fairly low," he said. "I think they're still more attractive to tourists."

Dr **Lee** added that the island's wet weather may also be a deterrent. But he said only time will tell if Singaporeans will take to river taxis.

The boats - which are also run by Singapore River Cruise - operate from 7am to 10pm, with waiting times of less than 10 minutes during peak hours.

From next month, commuters will be able to pay using their ez-link cards. There are also plans for a park-and-ride package allowing drivers to leave their cars at designated parking spaces and take a river taxi to their destination.

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**SUBJECT:** FUNDRAISING (78%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (78%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (78%); FERRIES (77%); CRUISES (77%); MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (73%); TRAVEL TICKETS (73%); RESTAURANTS (70%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE (94%) SINGAPORE (98%)

**LOAD-DATE:** January 2, 2013

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

March 11, 2011 Friday

## **More trips to ease train squeeze; 590 new trips a week from both train operators, but most are outside peak hours**

**BYLINE:** Royston Sim

**LENGTH:** 679 words

SUPERMARKET manager **Lee** Boon Guan takes the train every weekday morning from Choa Chu Kang to Clementi where he works.

He is usually able to board only the second or third train that passes by. 'It's quite packed in the mornings and sometimes there's no way to get on,' said the 43-year-old, who has to wait at least six minutes before he can get on at around 7.30am.

Some 590,000 people commute by train daily and complaints about overcrowding and long waits crop up regularly.

But commuters are on track to enjoy faster rides now that the two train operators are rolling out a further 590 trips a week - a 5 per cent increase over the existing number.

Transport Minister Raymond Lim said in Parliament on Tuesday that SMRT is adding 420 trips a week to the North-South and East-West lines from Sunday, and SBS Transit 170 to the North-East Line from March 21.

However, only some of the new SBS Transit trips and none of the new SMRT trips will be scheduled during the peak hours - 7am to 9am and 5pm to 8pm.

An SMRT spokesman said all its 'serviceable trains' are already deployed during peak hours.

So how much of a benefit would the extra trips bring to commuters if more than 400 of the 590 are outside peak hours?

These expanded options could prompt those with more flexible schedules to change their travelling times, believes Associate Professor **Lee Der Horng** from the National University of Singapore's department of civil engineering.

Urban congestion specialist Michael Li of the Nanyang Business School said additional trips would still make a difference during busy periods, even if they do not make up a big proportion of the 590 announced.

With the promise of shorter waits outside prime hours, more commuters could be expected to adjust their travelling habits, he said. This will help spread out the passenger load.

This is a plus, given that rail-capacity and operational constraints prevent the operators from doing more during peak hours, said Dr Li and Prof **Lee**.

On this issue, there is light at the end of the tunnel. The SMRT spokesman said the Jurong East Modification

More trips to ease train squeeze; 590 new trips a week from both train operators, but most are outside peak hours The Straits Times (Singapore) March 11, 2011 Friday

Project - which adds an extra track and platform to the interchange station - is due for completion in May. That, plus delivery of new trains, would allow SMRT to increase peak-hour capacity.

Associate Professor Gopinath Menon of Nanyang Technological University said overcrowding will ease further when more new lines come onstream.

Commuters will be able to use various stations as interchanges and hop onto another line for a shorter link to their destinations.

Things are in motion to bring that about, with the Land Transport Authority expanding the rail network to 278km by 2020. A new rail project will open every year for the next six years, including the Circle Line extension to Marina Bay next year and the Downtown Line Stage 1 in 2013.

Dr Lim Wee Kiak, who chairs the Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport, said the 590 additional trips can only ease, but not eliminate, congestion. 'If everyone wants to take the train at the same time, there's no way the system can accommodate everyone. Hopefully, with increased trips, more people will be encouraged to take the train earlier or later, and be rewarded with a less crowded ride,' he added.

He noted that SMRT is already offering a 10-cent discount for commuters who exit certain MRT stations in the city before 7.30am from Mondays to Saturdays. Asked if a peak-hour surcharge might work, he said this would penalise those who have no alternative but to travel during those times.

Commuters have mixed reactions over whether the provision of more trips outside busy periods would make them change their travelling patterns.

Supply planner Jonathan Yue, 30, felt it is hard for people to do so. 'I think people take the train for convenience - even if it's crowded, they will still take it,' he said.

But Mr **Lee**, the supermarket manager, does not mind changing habits. Given the shorter waits for rides outside peak hours, he is considering leaving earlier for work. He said: 'It's worth it to avoid the crowds.'

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**SUBJECT:** RAIL TRANSPORTATION (90%); TRAINS (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (90%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (86%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (69%); BUSINESS EDUCATION (64%); ENGINEERING (63%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** HENAN, CHINA (72%) SINGAPORE (76%); CHINA (72%)

**LOAD-DATE:** March 10, 2011

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

May 17, 2013 Friday

## Satellite ERP still years away: Lui

**SECTION:** TOP OF THE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 468 words

AFTER about two years of tests and trials, the Government has concluded that a satellite-based electronic road pricing (ERP) system, which can charge according to distance travelled, is likely to be feasible in Singapore.

The system will also be able to facilitate paperless street-side parking as well as dynamic charges for off-peak car use.

However, Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew said that "it will be several more years" before the new-generation ERP system can be implemented.

Speaking during a visit to the upcoming Marina Coastal Expressway yesterday, Mr Lui took pains to reassure motorists that they are unlikely to have to pay more with the new system.

He said the system will start off on roads which are already priced. And any expansion will be solely congestion-driven.

"Some motorists are worried they will be charged the moment they leave home or start their engines," he said. "Let me assure you that we have no intention of doing so."

The minister said the new system does away with bulky gantries, which are costly and take time to erect. Hence, it will be more responsive, capable of applying and altering charges fairly quickly.

The system will come with a new and sophisticated on-board monitor, which replaces the current in-vehicle unit.

Besides ERP, the new device will have various other functions, including couponless street parking and dynamic charging for off-peak cars. Currently, it costs a flat \$20 fee each day to use an off-peak car outside the designated 7pm to 7am period.

The Land Transport Authority (LTA) will work with the industry to develop other value-added services.

Possibilities include tracking of stolen vehicles, live traffic information, and even enforcement of illegal parking.

Mr Lui also reassured the public that the privacy of motorists will be safeguarded. One way, he said, would be "anonymising any data collected". The telecommunications industry already does this.

The LTA has been studying the feasibility of a gantryless ERP system since 1999. Trials in 2006-2007 found that the technology was not precise enough then.

But rigorous trials conducted from 2011, which cost about \$12 million and involved various consortiums,

Satellite ERP still years away: Lui The Straits Times (Singapore) May 17, 2013 Friday

found that the technologies involved have matured enough.

National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** believes the Government should try to use the full capabilities of the new system.

There was little point in replicating the current system, which charges motorists for using specific roads which are deemed to be congested, and travelling through certain areas, such as the city centre.

Dr **Lee** said: "ERP is not a toll system. If we want to maintain this principle, we should pursue a distance-based system... so we can achieve dynamic pricing."

CHRISTOPHER TAN

Additional reporting by Royston Sim

**SUBJECT:** SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY (89%); BACK OFFICE OPERATIONS (89%); VEHICLE THEFT (78%); TELECOMMUNICATIONS (78%); PARKING SPACES & FACILITIES (77%); NEWS BRIEFS (74%); PRODUCT PRICING (73%); PARKING OFFENSES (72%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (93%)

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Channel NewsAsia

December 10, 2012 Monday 1:17 PM GMT

## Raising fares to improve bus drivers' pay "should be last resort"

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 444 words

SINGAPORE: Industry observers say transport operators should look at alternative ways to raise the salaries of bus drivers.

Passing the buck to commuters should be the last resort, say observers.

They are commenting on Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew's suggestion that bus fares may go up in future to help improve the wages of bus drivers and that the public transport fare review, due next year, will consider this issue.

It's not easy getting Singaporeans to come on board as bus drivers.

So salary increments might make the job more appealing.

The question is: who will foot the bill?

Some industry observers said it should not be assumed that commuters will have to bear the additional costs as the two public transport operators remain profitable.

"So, from the passengers' side and the general public point of view, it may be difficult for them to swallow," said Professor **Lee Der-Hong**, an associate professor at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, National University of Singapore (NUS).

"...if they can first of all pursue their internal resources and try to improve their operations and see if they can further cut down operating costs, then perhaps, it wouldn't be necessary to approach the public and seek an increase in public transportation fare."

MP Gan Thiam Poh, who is also a member of the Government Parliamentary Committee (GPC) for Transport, said: "I feel strongly that the operators should try to explore or exhaust other means, such as other revenue, such as revenue coming from advertisements, rental or whatever...I think passing on (the costs) to consumer, that should be the last resort."

But even if salaries for bus drivers are raised, it might not be enough to get Singaporeans to bite.

Industry observers say that the long hours, rigorous work and the desire to have a job of higher value are among the main reasons Singaporeans shun the job.

Hence, a dependency on foreign manpower in this area might become unavoidable.

According to the chairman of the Public Transport Council, Gerard Ee, Singapore also lacks the body count and has an ageing workforce. That is why it must look to foreign manpower to fill the gaps in certain essential industries.

Raising fares to improve bus drivers' pay "should be last resort" Channel NewsAsia December 10, 2012  
Monday 1:17 PM GMT

"Some jobs are just not popular, and as long as people have choices, they will give it a miss," said Mr Ee.

Industry observers also suggested that the operators look beyond Malaysia and China when hiring bus drivers, "so we will not be overly-reliant on a particular country or a particular region", said NUS' Professor **Lee**.

Suggestions to nationalise public transport have been raised but some observers said that this could result in inefficiencies and a drop in service levels.

**SUBJECT:** WAGES & SALARIES (91%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (90%); INDUSTRY ANALYSTS (90%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (90%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (88%); LABOR FORCE (78%); OLDER WORKERS (73%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (73%); ENGINEERING (67%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** MALAYSIA (79%)

**LOAD-DATE:** December 10, 2012

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

February 25, 2011 Friday

## More taking MRT to work; Train ridership up sharply at the expense of bus commutes

**BYLINE:** Christopher Tan, Senior Correspondent

**LENGTH:** 805 words

IT HAS been quite clear to train commuters for some time now, but here is the official statistical evidence: MRT travel has risen sharply over the past decade.

According to the 2010 population census conducted by the Department of Statistics, the percentage of people who go to work by taking the MRT or a combination of MRT and other modes rose to 31.2 per cent last year - from 23.6 per cent in 2000.

In absolute terms, the increase is sharper, as the population base used last year was 1.88 million, versus 1.48 million in 2000. That translates to 585,200 people taking the train per day, versus 349,889 in 2000 - a 67.3 per cent jump.

The increase in train commutes has been at the expense of bus commutes. Those who take the bus to work fell from 25 per cent (370,645) to 19.3 per cent (361,999) in the same period.

Work trips by car inched upwards by only 1.1 percentage points - from 23.7 to 24.8 per cent - despite a 50 per cent increase in car population.

Observers point to the expansion of the rail network for the trend. According to the Land Transport Authority, the network stood at 158.5km at the end of last year, up from 90.8km in 2000.

Transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** of the National University of Singapore (NUS) said MRT is a preferred mode compared with buses because of 'better travel time and better overall travel experience'.

The census, however, found that the average bus commute took 39 minutes, versus 42 minutes for MRT - and as much as 53 minutes if the train ride included another intermediary mode, like a feeder service.

Experts said this could be because bus trips tend to be shorter than MRT trips. Also, MRT rides typically involve more walking.

The car still reigned supreme for those in a hurry. The average car trip took 28 minutes, surpassed only by the 27 minutes averaged by motorcycles.

On the minute growth in people driving to work despite the leap in car numbers, observers said there could be several reasons, including the rising effectiveness of Electronic Road Pricing (ERP), rising parking charges, and worsening peak-hour congestion.

Associate Professor Anthony Chin, who specialises in transport economics at the NUS, said: 'Also, we do not know how long the car trips are. The increase may be not be much, but are people driving longer distances?'

While the latest census pointed to public transport usage holding steady despite the surge in car numbers,

More taking MRT to work; Train ridership up sharply at the expense of bus commutes The Straits Times  
(Singapore) February 25, 2011 Friday

experts reckon it is still too early to say car usage is waning. ERP may seem effective but it does not curb car usage outside peak hours and areas without road pricing, for instance.

Assistant Professor Paul Barter, a specialist in urban transport policies from the **Lee** Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, said 'there is no sign yet of car use actually dropping'. Road network expansion projects, such as the North-South Expressway, would increase car usage.

'Only a strong change of policy can actually reduce car traffic,' he added. 'Or perhaps an extreme oil price shock.'

Nevertheless, he said fewer and fewer people will probably drive to work as the public transport infrastructure expands faster than the road network.

Elsewhere, the census showed poorer families relying more on buses than any other modes of transport. Nearly 40 per cent of HDB one- and two-roomers go to work by bus. The percentages for three-, four-, and five-roomers (including executive flat dwellers) are 29 per cent, 22 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.

Dr **Lee** said this was simply because bus fares tend to be generally lower than train fares. Added Prof Barter: 'Higher-income people probably have workplaces that are somewhat more concentrated in the key activity centres, such as the Central Business District, which are very well served by MRT.'

The Transport Ministry said it was 'encouraged by the census figures', adding that they 'reaffirm our strategy of expanding our rapid transit network'.

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Interesting data from the census:

Singapore's population stood at 5.08 million in 2010, up from 4.03 million in 2000. Density rose from 5,900 people per sq km to 7,126 people per sq km.

The proportion of people aged 65 years or more was highest among residents in areas such as Outram, Rochor, Queenstown and Bukit Merah. Punggol, in contrast, was the 'youngest' town.

People in the north are bigger users of the MRT for that commute to work. They include those living in towns such as Sembawang, Yishun, Woodlands and Choa Chu Kang.

Residents in Bukit Merah, Marine Parade and Bukit Panjang typically rely on buses.

Residents in Tanglin, Bukit Timah, Mandai and Newton mostly drive to work.

Among students, those of primary school age or younger get to school mainly by chartered buses or vans; secondary school students make up the biggest bus-taking cohort, while those in tertiary institutions rely mainly on the train.

CHRISTOPHER TAN

**SUBJECT:** POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS (91%); POPULATION SIZE (90%); CENSUS (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (89%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (89%); TRAINS (89%); TRENDS (78%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (78%); STATISTICS (78%); MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (73%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (69%); MOTOR VEHICLES (67%)

**LOAD-DATE:** February 24, 2011

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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(Singapore) February 25, 2011 Friday

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

July 29, 2012 Sunday

## **LTA to collect data on crowd situation; It will be its most in-depth survey on how packed buses and trains are**

**BYLINE:** Maria Almenoar, Transport Correspondent

**SECTION:** NEWS

**LENGTH:** 466 words

The Land Transport Authority (LTA) plans to collect data on how crowded buses and trains are through what will be its most in-depth survey on this issue.

It will look specifically at the crowd situation in the MRT, LRT and bus networks during the morning and evening peak hours on weekdays and late evening hours from Friday to Sunday.

Overcrowded trains and buses are the bugbear of commuters, with many complaining that they are unable to board the first train or bus that arrives.

Branding executive Audrey Tsen, 23, is one such disgruntled commuter. She takes the train from Tiong Bahru MRT station to her workplace at Bugis at around nine in the morning.

'By the time the train gets to Tiong Bahru it's so crowded that I have to wait for the next train or the one after,' she said.

'I've even started going to work 15 minutes later just to avoid the crowds.'

Surveyors have been asked to collect data every three months on when the train arrives and how many commuters are waiting for the train on the platform.

They are also expected to count how many passengers cannot get on the first train if it is crowded, and how many trains go by before the last person left behind from the batch waiting for the first train can eventually board a train.

For buses, surveyors are expected to count the number of passengers boarding and alighting at each bus stop and also how many commuters are unable to board the bus.

'Travel behaviour changes over time, and such surveys provide useful information in detecting trends in passenger ridership and for planning of transport services to meet future travel needs,' said an LTA spokesman.

This survey will complement the in-house analysis of ticketing data that the transport regulator now does.

A tender for a two-year contract of these services will close on Aug7.

The LTA said it could not reveal the cost of the survey as the tender was ongoing.

Public transport surveys are done yearly by the authority but these generally measure how satisfied

LTA to collect data on crowd situation; It will be its most in-depth survey on how packed buses and trains are  
The Straits Times (Singapore) July 29, 2012 Sunday

commuters are with public transport services.

Last year's Public Transport Customer Satisfaction Survey found that 90.3 per cent of the 3,100 respondents were satisfied with the overall public transport services.

National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** said that while it is a good idea for the LTA to get a 'feel of what is going on on the ground', the steps taken after the data collection are important.

Dr **Lee** said that there is little that can be done for the train network with trains running at full capacity currently.

'To alleviate congestion on the trains, they should look at making buses a better alternative and give buses top priority on the roads,' he said.

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**SUBJECT:** TRAINS (92%); POLLS & SURVEYS (89%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (89%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (89%); MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (78%); BUS STATIONS & TERMINALS (78%); CUSTOMER SATISFACTION (77%); TRENDS (77%); TRANSPORTATION LAW (73%); TRANSPORTATION REGULATION (73%); MARKETING SURVEYS (72%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (79%)

**LOAD-DATE:** July 28, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** The LTA will look specifically at the situation in MRT, LRT and bus networks during weekday peak hours, and late evening hours from Friday to Sunday. -- ST FILE PHOTO

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

August 19, 2010 Thursday

## **No train rides to Jurong East on two weekends; Closure for station modifications; free bus trips for affected commuters**

**BYLINE:** Christopher Tan, Senior Correspondent

**LENGTH:** 507 words

MORE than 70 bendy buses will be deployed to provide bridging services over two weekends next month, when train services in Jurong will be suspended for modification works to improve the capacity of Singapore's two oldest MRT lines.

Rides on these buses, which can carry 120 passengers each, will be free.

The \$800 million project centred on the Jurong East station will include the laying of 2.5km of new tracks and the building of a new passenger platform so that trains bound north, south, east and west will have dedicated tracks and platforms.

Of the total cost, \$368 million will pay for 22 new Kawasaki trains, the first here to be assembled in China.

When completed next year, the upgrading works will enable the quicker turnaround of trains at the Jurong East station - a busy interchange of the East-West and North-South lines - and bump up their capacity by 15 per cent.

Currently, there is a bottleneck: Each train approaching Jurong East station has to wait for the preceding one to leave before it can pull into the interchange.

This arrangement worked sufficiently well before, but not anymore, observers have said.

Daily rail ridership has recently crossed the two million mark, double the figure of 10 years ago.

Transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** of the National University of Singapore said: 'The number of people taking trains has gone up substantially. If nothing is done, the impact would be very undesirable, especially during the morning peak.'

Because a 60m section of an existing track has to be removed to facilitate the works, train services will be down over two weekends.

On Sept 4 and 5, there will be no train service between the Jurong East and Clementi stations; on Sept 18 and 19, services between the Jurong East and Bukit Batok stations will be disrupted.

The Land Transport Authority (LTA) is staggering the works, which involve merging new tracks with the existing lines, over two weekends to minimise service downtime.

LTA group director of rail Chua Chong Kheng said up to 200,000 commuters may be affected by the suspension of the train service.

'But we hope the public will cut down on discretionary trips on these two weekends so as not to add to the

No train rides to Jurong East on two weekends; Closure for station modifications; free bus trips for affected commuters The Straits Times (Singapore) August 19, 2010 Thursday

load,' he said.

Those who have to travel can use trains on the unaffected lines, take the bridging bus services offered, or rely on regular bus services in the area.

The rail modification project, the first of its kind for the 20-year-old MRT system, began early last year, and is expected to be completed some time next year, a year earlier than originally planned. Works completed so far include a new viaduct on which the new tracks will be laid, and the structure of the new platform.

With the 22 new trains to be introduced progressively, commuters travelling between the northern, eastern and western suburbs and downtown can expect some respite from overcrowding on two of Singapore's most used lines, which are now served by 106 trains.

The LTA expects waiting time to shorten from the current 2-1/2 to 4-1/2 minutes to two to three minutes.

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**SUBJECT:** TRAINS (90%); MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (89%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (89%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (78%)

**COMPANY:** WEE HUR HOLDINGS LTD (58%)

**TICKER:** E3B (SGX) (58%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS236220 COMMERCIAL & INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING CONSTRUCTION (58%); SIC1542 GENERAL CONTRACTORS - NONRESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS, OTHER THAN INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS & WAREHOUSES (58%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (92%); CHINA (79%)

**LOAD-DATE:** August 18, 2010

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**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

November 6, 2013 Wednesday

## **URA turns to tech for parking issues; It is seeking system that will do away with paper coupons, roving wardens**

**BYLINE:** Hoe Pei Shan

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 437 words

NO MORE tearing of coupons and roving parking attendants - that is the idea behind a new "electronic parking system" being explored by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA).

The system would have drivers accessing parking information and paying electronically from their cars via an "on-board unit" similar to the in-vehicle unit (IU) used in the Electronic Road Pricing system.

Parking offences would be detected and transmitted wirelessly to central computing systems or mobile enforcement vehicles. The latter could also capture image or video evidence of parking violations and recognise licence plates just by driving past the vehicles of alleged parking offenders.

These solutions were detailed in URA's request for proposal (RFP) for a "technical trial of an electronic parking system" last month.

In it, URA outlined that a key aim of the system is to allow it "to better manage its carpark inventory to avoid congestion". Interested contractors have till Dec 2 to submit proposals, and preparation for the trial will begin on Dec 30, with the trial set to end by Sept 30, next year.

"This is an ongoing effort to explore the use of technology to find a replacement to the paper parking coupons and at the same time reduce the manpower needed for enforcement," said a URA spokesman in response to queries from The Straits Times.

The authority is looking for proposals that will tap advancements in areas such as global navigation satellite systems, vehicular Wi-Fi and automated number plate recognition.

But the spokesman said the project is "exploratory" and that the authority will not be making changes to the current system soon.

"For now, the best alternative is to continue converting more URA carparks to the gantry parking system where we can."

URA now manages more than 46,000 public parking spaces here, of which 17,000 are on-street kerbside parking spaces. Such kerbside parking uses the coupon system, with enforcement carried out by parking attendants.

Another 29,000 are off-street parking spaces, and 15 of URA's off-street carparks are equipped with the gantry parking system.

URA turns to tech for parking issues; It is seeking system that will do away with paper coupons, roving wardens The Straits Times (Singapore) November 6, 2013 Wednesday

National University of Singapore civil engineering associate professor **Lee Der Horng**, who specialises in intelligent transportation systems, welcomes the move to explore a new electronic parking system.

"The future of kerbside parking could be quite competitive and this system would help both driver and the authorities to monitor usage and shape parking policy," he said.

It would ideally be integrated with the ERP system, but a more sophisticated IU is needed to realise URA's vision, added Dr **Lee**.

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**SUBJECT:** PARKING OFFENSES (90%); VEHICULAR OFFENSES (90%); PARKING SPACES & FACILITIES (89%); BACK OFFICE OPERATIONS (78%); MOTOR VEHICLE CRIME (78%); AUTOMOTIVE TELEMATICS (77%); ENGINEERING (75%); CONTRACTS & BIDS (74%); URBAN DEVELOPMENT (73%); ECONOMIC NEWS (73%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (71%); WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS (71%); INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEMS (71%); OPTICAL CHARACTER RECOGNITION (64%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (60%); SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY (50%); NAVIGATION SYSTEMS (50%); SATELLITE INDUSTRY (50%)

**LOAD-DATE:** November 5, 2013

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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Channel NewsAsia

May 16, 2011 Monday 2:39 AM GMT

## S'pore 18th in the commuting experience

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 566 words

**DATELINE:** SINGAPORE

When it comes to getting around the island, Singaporeans apparently have a worse journey experience than do commuters in New Delhi or Kuala Lumpur.

The Republic ranked 18th in a survey of 23 cities on public and private transport journey experiences.

Copenhagen, Seattle and Sydney had the most satisfied commuters, according to the inaugural Journey Experience Index by business research and consulting firm Frost and Sullivan.

Singapore scored 54.5 points, below the global benchmark of 61.

Those travelling on public transport indicated a higher level of discontent: Out of 740 public transport commuters and 674 private transport commuters polled here, 77.5 per cent and 57 per cent respectively were dissatisfied with their journey experience.

A comparative breakdown for the other cities was not immediately available.

However, one reason Singapore did not do better in the index could be the relatively high percentage of journeys made on public transport, as cities with higher car usage tended to record greater satisfaction in the overall journey experience, said Mr Vivek Vaidya, Frost's Asia-Pacific vice-president of its automotive and transportation practice.

The index gave equal weightage to four areas: Timeliness in reaching one's destination, value-for-money, convenience and overall journey experience.

Mr Vaidya said the main frustrations of public transport commuters were overcrowding, switching between different modes of transport as well as getting to and from their homes and train stations.

Car owners said their journey times were predictable, but groused about the lack of value-for-money, with charges such as Electronic Road Pricing, he said.

Transport analyst **Lee Der Horng** of the National University of Singapore was surprised that Singapore ranked below cities such as Beijing and Kuala Lumpur.

But the findings suggest room for improvement in bus services here, he said.

A significant percentage of commuters get to train stations by bus, and "now that we have more MRT lines, transfer between (different) modes becomes more and more common", he said. Train services are relatively predictable whereas buses, which are subject to road and traffic conditions, are less so, he added.

"So, how to eliminate those uncertainties in bus services - that's what the operators and regulators should pay extra attention to," he said.

Frost's findings vary from a customer satisfaction survey commissioned by the Land Transport Authority, the results of which were released earlier this year.

Of 3,100 public transport commuters polled last October, 92.2 per cent were satisfied with service, according to the latter.

Respondents gave an average service rating of 7.3 out of 10. Commuters were asked to rate satisfaction levels in eight areas including comfort, waiting time and reliability.

Associate Professor **Lee** noted that the two surveys' methodologies were different and should not be compared.

In reply to queries, the LTA told MediaCorp it was doing its best to increase the transport system capacity and will spend S\$60 billion over the next 10 years to expand the rail network.

Since last June, when LTA began quarterly reviews to improve heavily utilised bus services, 51 services have been improved through higher frequency and deployment of higher-capacity buses.

"The LTA will also continue to build new road infrastructure to cater to travel demands," a spokesperson said.

-/rt

**SUBJECT:** PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (90%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (89%); POLLS & SURVEYS (78%); CUSTOMER SATISFACTION (77%); TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (77%); CONSULTING SERVICES (72%); MARKETING SURVEYS (72%); RAIL STATIONS & TERMINALS (69%); MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (68%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (63%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** NEW DELHI, INDIA (92%) SINGAPORE (96%); INDIA (92%); ASIA (79%)

**LOAD-DATE:** May 16, 2011

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

February 15, 2009 Sunday

## **Finding a fair way to cut fares; Potential pothole ahead on road to lower fares: the cost of transition to distance-based fares**

**BYLINE:** Yeo Ghim Lay

**SECTION:** THINK

**LENGTH:** 722 words

Members of the Public Transport Council (PTC) will meet this month to make what could be the most eagerly anticipated decision to come out of the council in its 22-year history - the amount by which bus and train fares will be lowered.

The 16-member council is in talks with transport operators SBS Transit and SMRT, which have agreed to pass on millions of dollars in savings from the Budget to commuters.

But there is a potential pothole on the road to lower fares: Transport operators are now managing the transition towards charging distance-based fares, a change that is supposed to be completed by year's end.

With distance-based fares in place, commuters who make transfers to get from Point A to Point B will not be charged more than those who choose to take a direct but perhaps longer route to the same destination.

Few would quarrel that distance-based charging is fairer than the current system, which is weighted against those who make transfers. So the move towards distance-based fares should go on. But the transition is going to cost the transport operators money.

Last October, the first step towards distance charging was taken by increasing the transfer rebate from 25 cents to 40 cents, a move which narrowed the difference between transfer and one-trip fares.

The next step is another increase to the transfer rebate to make transfer and one-trip fares the same.

The plumping of the transfer rebate last year cost transport operators about \$45 million. The operators shouldered over 60 per cent of this tab, with commuters carrying the rest.

Because the bigger rebates kicked in at the same time as a fare hike, commuters who made transfers actually ended up paying lower fares for their journeys; most other bus and train rides cost four cents more each with the fare hike.

Who will shoulder the cost of the next phase of the transition to distance-based fares?

And how will this colour the planned fare cut?

Transport operators must be credited for volunteering to lower fares, but the goodwill earned from this will evaporate if the fare cut is negated by whatever rises in fares wrought by the move towards distance-based fares.

Finding a fair way to cut fares; Potential pothole ahead on road to lower fares: the cost of transition to distance-based fares The Straits Times (Singapore) February 15, 2009 Sunday

Transport researcher **Lee Der-Hong**, an associate professor at the National University of Singapore, hopes the fare cut will be deeper than the four-cent quantum approved for the hike late last year.

He said: 'It should be more significant than that in order to make an impact and to register on Singaporeans, so as to get more of them onto public transport.'

Getting more people to embrace public transport should be the goal to shoot for - one that will bring extra revenue that could well make up for what is lost from handing out bigger transfer rebates.

Prof **Lee** added: 'Ridership will go up, which is good for the operators themselves as revenue will go up. Everyone benefits.'

From the commuters' point of view, any help in keeping household expenses down will be welcome in this year of pay cuts and job losses.

Spending on transport, along with food and housing, makes up the bulk of a household's expenses.

This is still the case, although the percentage of household income spent on public transport fell below 6 per cent last year, from 6.5 per cent in 2006.

Even as transport operators are lowering transport fares, the Government is doing its part for low-income families struggling with transport costs by topping up the Public Transport Fund to \$10 million.

Cheering this extra source of aid, Mr Lim Biow Chuan, an MP for Marine Parade GRC, said: 'Public transport is a big part of most families' expenses. It is a fixed cost because you will need to take the bus or train.'

As the economic crisis takes hold, more Singaporeans will turn to the bus or train instead of taking a cab or driving.

Keeping fares affordable will make public transport even more attractive - the very goal the Government identified when it unveiled its ambitious plan last year to revamp the transport system.

Transport Minister Raymond Lim promised a more people-centred land transport system, one 'planned and built for people'.

The \$40 billion the Government is spending on new rail projects will greatly enhance commuter convenience and guarantee transport operators a steady revenue stream for years to come. But for this year, a fare cut will be a good way to deliver on that promise.

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**SUBJECT:** URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (90%); PRICE CUTTING (89%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (60%)

**LOAD-DATE:** February 14, 2009

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

73 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

December 25, 2012 Tuesday

## **Car buyers want COE system reviewed; Some suggest priority for first-timers, doing away with engine capacity tiers**

**BYLINE:** hoe pei shan

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 697 words

WITH certificates of entitlement (COEs) for small cars breaching the \$80,000 mark, some are renewing the call for the current quota system to be reviewed.

Suggestions include using measures other than engine capacity to distinguish the COE categories for car ownership and a bidding system that gives preferential treatment to first-time owners.

COE premiums for Category A cars up to 1,600cc - which comprise the most affordable cars in the market - rose to an all-time high of \$81,889 late last week.

That has put most new cars just beyond the reach of many car buyers interviewed by The Straits Times at car showrooms last weekend. "With COE premiums this high, I haven't seen any within my budget," said SAF regular Thomas Tan, 32, after emerging from the Hyundai showroom on Alexandra Road on Sunday.

Mr Tan added that he needs a car to shuttle between work and the home of his 15-month-old son's babysitter and has spent the last few weeks looking for a car to replace his second-hand Peugeot 308, which has developed gearbox and suspension problems.

Mrs Zuby Smith, 47, who was shopping for a new car to replace her eight-year-old Hyundai Santa Fe, also could not find a new car that would fit within her budget of "about \$100,000". "The small car COE price is too high," she said, adding that she has been left with a choice of servicing a hefty car loan or waiting a long time for the COE premiums to fall.

"We're just average people who need only one car. The Government has to do something to change this," added the mother of three who runs a beauty business.

Mr Tan said that while he supports the Government's overall goals in managing the car population, the COE system could be tweaked to integrate a needs-based assessment similar to that of HDB flat applications.

He suggested that car buyers with children that need one family car should be given priority. Owners of two or more cars could be moved to the bottom of the COE eligibility list or made to pay additional fees, he added.

Another suggestion that has surfaced over the years is to replace the COE engine capacity tiers with an indicator that more accurately distinguishes luxury cars from more affordable ones.

NUS civil engineering associate professor and transport systems specialist **Lee Der Horng** said engine

Car buyers want COE system reviewed; Some suggest priority for first-timers, doing away with engine capacity tiers The Straits Times (Singapore) December 25, 2012 Tuesday

capacity used to be a decent indicator until recently.

He noted that top brands such as Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Audi have rolled out models with engine capacities that fall into Category A rules, pushing up premiums there as a result.

Distributors of cheaper Korean and Japanese cars do not have the profit margins to vie against continental brands. They therefore lose out when attracting customers with rebates and overtrades.

"Transportation management is a social issue so public desire and reactions are things the policymaker has to consider," said Dr **Lee**, adding that the amount of horsepower in a car could be a more reliable guide.

In the meantime, dealers said there is no short-term respite on the horizon for COE prices.

Singapore Vehicle Traders Association secretary Raymond Tang said last week that prices for small cars will hover around the current mark for a while. They are likely to continue moving north until about 2015, when more vehicles are due to be scrapped.

COEs, which give buyers the right to purchase a car, enable the Government to control the growth of the vehicle population and road congestion. Their supply is calibrated by the rate the Government sets for annual vehicle growth, and is largely tied to the number of vehicles taken off the road each month.

Category A has borne the sharpest decline of close to 40 per cent for the period of August this year to next January, as far fewer cars were scrapped in the preceding six months.

This has caused prices to spike, despite other government moves to reduce competitive bidding for COEs. These include removing taxis from the bidding process.

The Government has, in recent years, announced plans to boost public transport infrastructure to reduce the nation's reliance on cars. These include building several new train lines as well as financing the addition of bus services nationwide.

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**SUBJECT:** MOTOR VEHICLES (91%); BUDGETS (88%); LUXURY GOODS (73%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (68%); ENGINEERING (60%)

**LOAD-DATE:** December 24, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

74 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

March 6, 2013 Wednesday

## **Analysts: Tough to specify income cap; They say such a move is rare in other cities and a 'red tape' challenge**

**BYLINE:** Jermyn Chow

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 589 words

OFFERING fare concessions to commuters may be common practice globally, but to draw the line based on income levels, which Singapore is considering, is rare.

Several transport analysts The Straits Times spoke to even suggested that the move, while well-intentioned, may lead to an "administrative headache".

A high-level panel reviewing public transport fares in Singapore said on Monday it is considering a monthly travel pass to cap how much average-income households spend on bus and train trips. That raised two key questions: How much should the cap be, and who should qualify for it?

Transport economist Michael Li from Nanyang Technological University wondered if the Fare Review Mechanism Committee, which suggested the scheme, can come up with a means-testing system that is fair and cost-effective.

"How do you gauge income levels? By their income tax statements? And how many more people will you need to look through the documents and ascertain who qualifies or not?" he said.

"It will be interesting to see if the benefits outweigh the costs of administering this scheme."

In cities such as Sydney, Melbourne, Toronto and London, commuters who get discounted rides fall under easily distinguishable groups such as the elderly, students and the unemployed.

In the Australian state of New South Wales, for example, the unemployed are issued a card qualifying them for 50 per cent discount on fares. In London, anyone who is 60 and above, and those with disabilities, can travel for free.

Unlike these easy-to-define groups, the "average income" definition is "arbitrary", said National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng**. He also wondered whether there would be a flat or a tiered cap that depends on income levels.

When the committee, which was tasked to relook bus and train fares last June, was asked yesterday how it would determine who qualified for the cap, it declined to comment, saying it was "premature". But it did previously suggest that it was looking at households that earn about \$4,000 a month, since they make up the majority of public transport users. There was no indication yesterday as to how much any cap would be.

Mr Richard Magnus, who chairs the committee, had suggested in a blog post on Monday that average-income earners who spend \$120 or more a month on public transport needed help.

Analysts: Tough to specify income cap; They say such a move is rare in other cities and a 'red tape' challenge The Straits Times (Singapore) March 6, 2013 Wednesday

Ten commuters whom The Straits Times contacted yesterday said they would pay from \$60 to \$100 for a monthly pass. The Straits Times understands any new scheme could be similar to the current concession pass that a student or senior citizen uses. (See box on current concessions)

There are monthly passes that are already available to frequent users of public transport.

With ez-link's season pass, a commuter pays \$190 a month - or about \$6 a day - for unlimited bus and train rides in a month.

SBS Transit also offers a \$98 monthly pass that allows commuters to take unlimited bus trips.

But Dr **Lee** believes these are too expensive for cash-strapped commuters. "The Government wants to consider the needs of the less privileged but it is also handicapped by the financial considerations of the profit-driven public transport operators here."

Ms Theresa Andrew, a nurse assistant who earns a monthly salary of \$1,300 but spends up to \$100 a month on public transport, hopes any new scheme will help cut her costs. "I live near my workplace... so sometimes I will just walk... But it will be good if I can take the bus and pay less."

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Additional reporting by Sue-Ann Tan

**SUBJECT:** TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (90%); MIDDLE INCOME PERSONS (89%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (89%); PERSONAL & FAMILY INCOME (78%); AVERAGE EARNINGS (76%); STUDENTS & STUDENT LIFE (74%); UNEMPLOYED PERSONS (73%); BLOGS & MESSAGE BOARDS (60%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA (79%); SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA (79%); TORONTO, ON, CANADA (79%); LONDON, ENGLAND (70%) NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA (79%); ONTARIO, CANADA (79%); HENAN, CHINA (57%) SINGAPORE (95%); AUSTRALIA (79%); CANADA (79%); CHINA (57%)

**LOAD-DATE:** March 5, 2013

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**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

75 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

February 4, 2012 Saturday

## **More bus drivers needed; Operators increasingly look abroad to fill gap**

**BYLINE:** Shuli Sudderuddin

**SECTION:** PRIME NEWS

**LENGTH:** 665 words

WITH Singaporeans reluctant to take up jobs as bus drivers, operators SBS Transit and SMRT are increasingly turning to Malaysia and China to plug the gap. The crunch comes at a time when both companies have expanded their fleets and bus ridership has gone up to 3.45 million a day last year, a jump of 12 per cent from 2008.

The problem has been noted by the Public Transport Council (PTC), which said on Wednesday that Singapore faces a shortage of bus drivers. Unless transport operators can attract more recruits, they may not be able to put enough buses on the roads, said PTC chairman Gerard Ee.

SBS Transit, Singapore's biggest bus operator, has said it is short by about 180 drivers, even as it and SMRT have not let up on recruitment drives.

SBS Transit currently has more than 5,300 bus drivers, of whom only 61 per cent are Singaporeans and permanent residents. Some 26 per cent are Malaysians, and the rest are from China.

SMRT, where 30 per cent of its 1,900 bus drivers are foreigners, is also working with Community Development Councils and the National Trades Union Congress to widen its recruitment outreach.

Industry players and experts said the shortage is not going to go away any time soon. Statistics from the Ministry of Manpower last year showed that as at September last year, there were 1,130 openings for bus drivers, particularly in the transport and storage industry. Some 91.7 per cent of the vacancies had remained unfilled for six months.

National Transport Workers' Union president Mohd Rasi Taib said the industry needs to be more competitive to attract more drivers. Basic bus driver pay without perks starts at about \$1,375 a month.

At SBS Transit, which raised pay from \$1,196 a month in 2010, its local and foreign bus drivers get the same perks, but those from China also get accommodation. It also raised the retirement age from 62 to 65.

But experts said pay and working conditions need to be improved further. MP Ang Wei Neng, a member of the Government Parliamentary Committee (GPC) for Transport, said that although the pay has been raised, the working hours are still long.

'We really need measures to increase recruitment like better salary, working facilities such as rest areas and better working conditions,' said Mr Ang, who is also SBS Transit vice-president.

Labour specialist Tan Khee Giap of the **Lee** Kuan Yew School of Public Policy said: 'It is more attractive to

More bus drivers needed; Operators increasingly look abroad to fill gap The Straits Times (Singapore)  
February 4, 2012 Saturday

be a taxi driver, for example, because you can work on your own time.'

MP Seng Han Thong, deputy chairman of the GPC for Transport, said the shortage has persisted for years: 'Apart from hiring new drivers, keeping existing drivers healthy and fit so that they can work longer might also help the situation.'

He noted that operators have a hard time balancing the need to offer attractive pay packages with keeping manpower costs and fares down.

But the shortage needs to be solved, experts said, as the consequences are very real.

Associate Professor **Lee Der Horng** of the National University of Singapore's Department of Civil Engineering said the shortage would prevent operators from coping with growing ridership: 'It will be difficult to have more buses, longer services or better frequencies without resolving this problem.'

As at August last year, SBS Transit had about 3,000 buses, while SMRT had just under 1,000. This is up from about 2,700 buses for SBS and 800 for SMRT in August 2005.

One Singaporean bus driver said that while he enjoys his work, it might prove challenging for others, such as doing shift work from 3am to 3pm.

Mr Tan Soon Hwa, 44, whose SMRT bus provides a loop service around Yishun Ring Road, has been seeing fewer Singaporeans join the industry in the past two to three years.

Mr Tan, who got an award for five years of service in 2009, is now gunning for the 10-year one. He said: 'I would still tell people to try it because it is a challenge and not as mundane as they think.'

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**SUBJECT:** MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (90%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (89%); EMPLOYMENT (89%); LABOR SHORTAGES (78%); WAGES & SALARIES (78%); LABOR DEPARTMENTS (73%); PUBLIC POLICY (71%); LABOR UNIONS (71%); RETIREMENT AGE (66%); RETIREMENT & RETIREES (62%)

**COMPANY:** SBS TRANSIT LTD (91%)

**ORGANIZATION:** TRADES UNION CONGRESS (55%)

**TICKER:** S61 (SGX) (91%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS485210 INTERURBAN & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (91%); SIC4131 INTERCITY & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (91%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** CHINA (94%); SINGAPORE (94%); MALAYSIA (93%)

**LOAD-DATE:** February 3, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

76 of 190 DOCUMENTS



TODAY (Singapore)

February 1, 2013 Friday  
APM Edition

## 2 new commercial belts to move jobs away from CBD

**BYLINE:** Sumita Sreedharan

**SECTION:** HNP; Singapore; Pg. 6

**LENGTH:** 554 words

**HIGHLIGHT:** Spaces will help to ease road, public transport congestion, but experts divided on success of decentralisation so far

SINGAPORE - In a bid to bring jobs closer to homes, two new corridors for commercial activity have been targeted as growth areas by the Government, according to the Land Use Plan paper released by the Ministry of National Development (MND) yesterday.

The North Coast Innovation Corridor will include Woodlands, Seletar, Punggol and the redevelopment of the Sembawang Shipyard, while the Southern Waterfront City will include Pasir Panjang, Alexandra and Tanjong Pagar.

These areas will provide 13 million square metres of space to support more employment opportunities and amenities outside the city centre, allowing the authorities to tackle the issue of congestion on roads and public transport.

The new industrial cluster in the north will be supported by new transport infrastructure, such as the Thomson MRT Line and the North-South Expressway, with both running from Woodlands into the heart of the Central Business District (CBD).

Meanwhile, airport and seaport capacity will be increased to create more jobs sited away from the CBD, with the development of the new Terminal 4 and the expansion of Terminal 1 at Changi Airport.

To further ease congestion in the built-up commercial areas, the Government is also promoting flexible work arrangements, where employees can work from home by tapping on info-communication technology.

While analysts felt that the new cluster in the north would be attractive to clean technology, aerospace industries and labour-intensive industries from across the Causeway, others, like Marketing Manager Shaun Ng, were less enthused by the idea of working in a less central location.

2 new commercial belts to move jobs away from CBD TODAY (Singapore) February 1, 2013 Friday

Mr Ng, 33, who lives in Novena, pointed out that although travelling to areas like Punggol or Woodlands would mean a more comfortable commute, it would take more time and be more expensive.

"It could be all right for some jobs, maybe the more office-bound type, but I have to travel for my job and having to travel from, let's say, Punggol to meet clients in the town area would simply be more time-consuming and have a major impact on my pockets," he said.

Experts were divided on the success of the ongoing effort to decentralise activities to regional business hubs in Tampines and Woodlands.

Property firm Chris International's Director, Mr Chris Koh, said response to these new business hubs has been good so far, owing to the ready pool of employees in these areas.

"Any commercial property that we put up in these areas are snapped up," he said.

But transport analyst **Lee Der Horng** from the National University of Singapore disagreed, saying it has been difficult persuading the private sector to make the move.

The most effective way to encourage businesses to move out of the city would be for the Government to take the lead as the sectors they deal with would naturally move with them, said Associate Professor **Lee**.

Head of Research at SLP International Property Consultants, Mr Nicholas Mak, said these business hubs had enjoyed "a certain amount of success", but noted that some investors remained unwilling to develop these areas as their non-central locations meant lower rental yields.

"The image of these commercial areas needs to be shaped by the Government and then more businesses will be drawn there gradually," Mr Mak said, citing Punggol's development into a waterfront district as an example.

**SUBJECT:** JOB CREATION (90%); TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (89%); CITY LIFE (89%); LAND USE PLANNING (89%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (89%); EMPLOYMENT (78%); HOME BASED EMPLOYMENT (78%); TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE (78%); FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS (78%); EMPLOYMENT GROWTH (78%); REAL ESTATE (78%); COMMERCIAL PROPERTY (78%); HARBORS & PORTS (76%); CITIES (76%); SHIPBUILDING (71%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (60%) Property

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (94%)

**LOAD-DATE:** May 23, 2013

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

77 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

July 7, 2012 Saturday

## Better anticipate and cater to ridership growth

**BYLINE:** Royston Sim

**SECTION:** SATURDAY SPECIAL REPORT

**LENGTH:** 796 words

THE Committee of Inquiry (COI) has fingered ageing rail assets as a contributing factor in last December's two major MRT disruptions.

It traced the root of the North-South Line breakdowns to defective parts on support structures that hold up the power-supplying third rail.

The failure of these components was a sign of ageing infrastructure, and such problems will become more common with time.

Combined with a fast-rising ridership, the ageing MRT network will become operator SMRT's 'greatest challenge' in the near future, the COI said.

With MRT ridership set to grow further, what can be done'

Transport observers say the authorities and public transport operators will have to better anticipate and cater to ridership growth.

Back in 2000, then National Development Minister Mah Bow Tan said the population was expected to grow from 3.9 million to 5.5 million by 2040 or 2050. However, population growth far outstripped those projections, rising to 5.2 million last year.

From 2003 to 2009, the population swelled from 4.1 million to five million. Yet the total length of MRT lines here barely grew in that same period.

The MRT network spanned 109.4km in 2003. It was not expanded till 2009, when the Boon Lay Extension and first part of the Circle Line opened. As of last year, the total length of the network was 146.5km.

Observers say the 2004 Nicoll Highway collapse not only delayed the completion of the Circle Line, but probably also pushed back plans for new lines as well.

Meanwhile, train ridership kept pace with population growth. Last year, it grew by 10.9 per cent to 2.4 million trips per day. In 2006, there was an average of 1.4 million trips per day.

Associate Professor **Lee Der Horng**, a National University of Singapore (NUS) transport researcher, said the MRT infrastructure here is 'lagging behind'.

Stage two of the Downtown Line (DTL2), which will open in 2015 and link Bukit Panjang to Bugis, would have made a lot of difference if it had been ready five years earlier, he said.

Better anticipate and cater to ridership growth The Straits Times (Singapore) July 7, 2012 Saturday

Labelling the stretch from Bukit Panjang as a 'major transport corridor', he said DTL2 would have eased congestion on the East-West Line.

He believes the building of MRT lines should be supply-driven, as opposed to being driven by demand. 'As long as you provide supply, the demand here will follow,' he said.

Cities such as Taipei and Beijing have built lines first to connect commuters living in the outskirts of the city, he added.

To cater to the surge in demand, the train operators here have added some 2,000 train trips per week since 2008.

During the six-week inquiry, former SMRT chief executive Saw Phaik Hwa said increased train runs to meet a surge in passenger demand was the main cause of a rise in rail disruptions and delays.

Independent transport consultant Tham Chen Munn said MRT ridership would definitely increase further, especially as the Government tries to move towards its goal of having 70 per cent of the population take public transport by 2020.

'Can our ageing system handle the expected increase in ridership? The authorities will need to answer this,' he said.

Mr Tham added that the inquiry will certainly serve as a wake-up call.

'There's no such thing as a 100 per cent system,' he said. 'We have to anticipate the problems associated with an ageing system like wear-and-tear and capacity, and plan to handle them.'

Prof **Lee** noted that the issue is not a new one. The key to managing any ageing rail line is to ramp up maintenance accordingly and implement timely upgrades, he said.

The authorities expect upcoming rail lines to ease the pressure on existing MRT lines.

The three-stage Downtown Line will be ready by 2017, while the Thomson Line is due in 2018 and the Eastern Region Line, by 2020. More MRT lines are on the way beyond this decade.

Dr Vukan Vuchic, a University of Pennsylvania transport expert, said cities can either build more lines with smaller capacity or lines that can accommodate trains with more carriages than initially needed, which leaves room for expansion.

Some metro lines in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Washington have adopted the latter design.

MP Lim Biow Chuan, a member of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport, said it would definitely be better to build ahead of demand and construct train stations that are able to accommodate additional carriages. He noted, however, that the Government will also have to take into account budgetary and engineering constraints in its planning.

Mr Tham believes future transport masterplans should include a more robust bus system to complement the rail network, and other alternative transport modes such as cycling.

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**SUBJECT:** URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (89%); POPULATION GROWTH (89%); INVESTIGATIONS (78%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (78%); TRAINS (78%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (62%); EXECUTIVES (50%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** TAIPEI, TAIWAN (79%) TAIWAN (79%)

**LOAD-DATE:** July 6, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** Ageing rail assets were a contributing factor in last December's major MRT disruptions. The key to managing any ageing rail line is to ramp up maintenance accordingly and implement timely upgrades, said NUS' Prof **Lee**. -- ST FILE PHOTO

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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Channel NewsAsia

November 8, 2012 Thursday 11:49 PM GMT

## Thinkers "should join conversation"

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 646 words

SINGAPORE: Known for speaking his mind on national policies after his retirement from the Civil Service, former Permanent Secretary Ngiam Tong Dow on Thursday called on academics in tertiary institutions here to join the fray on public discourse.

Speaking at the 3rd China-India-Singapore dialogue on higher education hosted by the National University of Singapore (NUS), the NUS Pro-Chancellor challenged the Singapore-based academics among the 160-strong audience - which included academics from overseas institutions - to "help the State to ask the right questions".

Mr Ngiam, 75, argued that this is key to the Republic achieving sustainable economic growth.

Rather than boosting population numbers, what Singapore needs to do is to increase its knowledge base - and, in that regard, universities have to do more than just teach "skills and technical knowledge".

Urging university faculty members to offer views on national issues, Mr Ngiam noted that "unlike the Civil Service, university dons are detached from the Executive".

Said Mr Ngiam: "By elucidating different dimensions of a national problem, our thinkers in ivory towers can indeed enlighten the legislature to make (better) decisions for Singapore."

Speaking to reporters later, Mr Ngiam reiterated that with academics participating in the national discourse, the process could eventually lead to a "more sensible conclusion".

While he acknowledged that some academics may be worried about speaking out on national policies, he stressed that "there is a difference between critiquing and criticising" - the former means looking at things in a different way, he said.

Citing the example of Shanghai, where top brains across disciplines come together to study a local issue, Mr Ngiam said universities here should not research for its own sake.

Citing Singapore's family planning challenges, Mr Ngiam suggested that apart from sociologists, other thought leaders could provide their views, possibly resulting in an inter-disciplinary solution.

University professors TODAY spoke to agreed with Mr Ngiam that academia has a role to play in spurring public discussion.

Nanyang Technological University sociologist Kwok Kian Woon reiterated that faculty members can raise wider and deeper questions, and contribute informed and non-partisan views.

Singapore Management University (SMU) law lecturer Eugene Tan, who has commented extensively on public issues, cited the fear factor as a possible deterrent for academics to speak out.

But, he pointed out: "Precisely because tax-payers contribute substantively to the funding of the autonomous universities here, there is the need for universities and academics not to be stuck in the proverbial ivory towers."

Also, some academics would be uncomfortable with putting forward their views when they do not have all the facts and figures, Asst Prof Tan said. At the same time, some senior faculty "frown upon their colleagues being involved", he said. "They regard such involvement as purely non-academic and not in keeping with the academic norms," he added.

NUS transport analyst **Lee Der-Horng**, who has also spoken out regularly on transport issues, said he found it strange that compared to other countries, academics here are not necessarily thought leaders who drive discussion on public issues.

Dr **Lee**, who is born in Taiwan, said he did not feel that his status as a foreigner hampered his ability to contribute to Singapore's national discourse. "People have posted nasty comments online but I say what I feel and think before I make the comment," he said.

SMU political science lecturer Bridget Welsh felt that "there has not been enough signals that there is acceptance of different points of view".

She suggested that the Ministry of Education assess universities based on their contributions to policies, and facilitate more exchanges between faculty members and bureaucrats.

-

**SUBJECT:** PUBLIC POLICY (90%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (89%); COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (77%); SOCIOLOGY (77%); HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCE (77%); POPULATION SIZE (74%); ECONOMIC POLICY (73%); ECONOMIC NEWS (73%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (73%); ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (69%); ECONOMIC GROWTH (69%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SHANGHAI, CHINA (58%) EAST CHINA (58%); HENAN, CHINA (58%) SINGAPORE (95%); CHINA (92%); INDIA (90%)

**LOAD-DATE:** November 8, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

February 21, 2013 Thursday

## **A faster, cheaper transport option to KL; Impact will be felt most by low-cost airlines plying S'pore-KL route: Expert**

**BYLINE:** Royston Sim

**SECTION:** TOP OF THE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 589 words

TRAVELLERS are happy about the high-speed rail link between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur as it will save them significant time and possibly money.

But airlines and coach operators are none too thrilled. The competition, said industry players, will be felt most by those providing purely point-to-point services between the two cities, especially budget airlines.

Mr Brendan Sobie, a Singapore-based analyst at the Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (Capa), noted that airlines such as Singapore Airlines and Malaysia Airlines have many passengers who go on to connect to other flights in KL or Changi.

"The biggest impact is more on airlines with point-to-point services between Singapore and KL," he said, naming airlines such as Jetstar Asia and Tiger Airways.

In an analysis, Capa said the new link "could result in a huge drop-off in air traffic between the two cities". The impact would be felt most by low-cost carriers, which now control 60 per cent of the Singapore-KL market.

However, AirAsia Singapore chief executive Logan Velaitham said that while the new rail link will provide more choices for consumers, it will have little impact on the airline. "We compete against our cost at all times and not against others."

He noted that AirAsia has a vision to allow passengers to fly for free in time to come and pay only for ancillary services, such as meals and travel insurance. This goal will help the airline stay relevant and competitive.

A Tiger Airways spokesman said it maintains a high level of flexibility in deploying planes and will re-strategise should business conditions change or new opportunities arise. According to Capa, the Singapore-KL route is the second busiest out of Changi, behind the Singapore-Jakarta one.

Dr **Lee Der Horng**, a transport researcher at the National University of Singapore, noted that air travel between Taipei and Kaohsiung in Taiwan eased off after a high-speed rail link was established between the two cities in 2007.

He said the fares for high-speed rail services will be cheaper than those for full-service airlines. However, they will be more than what budget carriers and coach buses charge.

A faster, cheaper transport option to KL; Impact will be felt most by low-cost airlines plying S'pore-KL route:  
Expert The Straits Times (Singapore) February 21, 2013 Thursday

Depending on the date of travel and whether it is a budget or full-service airline, fares to KL can range from under \$100 to more than \$300.

Coach-bus tickets between Singapore and KL currently range from around \$30 to \$60.

Mr Elson Yap, managing director of bus firm Transtar, said the high-speed rail connection will provide stiff competition.

He anticipates having to lower fares to KL in order to compete and attract those who prefer to travel cheap.

"There is still a market for lower fares. Not everyone can afford to pay \$80 or \$100 for high-speed rail."

WTS Travel managing director Michael Seah said the rail link's impact will depend on its price.

He noted, however, that coach buses are still needed for organised tours and such vehicles can also serve the smaller towns.

Businessman Ravinder Singh, 43, who makes a five-hour drive to KL several times a year, is willing to pay up to \$100 for a return trip via high-speed rail.

"A high-speed rail which allows me to make the journey within 90 minutes is definitely a great idea. The only worry I have is on the safety side. At such speeds, the impact of an accident would be disastrous," he said.

Concerts project manager Brandon Wee, 28, who flies to KL several times a year, welcomes another travel alternative.

"It's an option since it's faster, considering you have to check in early at the airport."

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SEE OPINION

**SUBJECT:** AIRLINES (95%); MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (89%); HIGH SPEED TRAINS (89%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (78%); AIR SERVICE (78%); NEWS BRIEFS (74%); TRAVEL INSURANCE (74%); TRAVEL TICKETS (74%); AIR FARES (73%); BUSINESS CLIMATE & CONDITIONS (72%); EXECUTIVES (71%)

**COMPANY:** MALAYSIA AIRLINE SYSTEM BDH (71%); SINGAPORE AIRLINES LTD (57%); AIRASIA X SDN BHD (55%)

**TICKER:** C6L (SGX) (57%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS481111 SCHEDULED PASSENGER AIR TRANSPORTATION (57%); SIC4512 AIR TRANSPORTATION, SCHEDULED (57%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA (88%); TAIPEI, TAIWAN (79%); KAO-HSIUNG, TAIWAN, PROVINCE OF CHINA (56%) SINGAPORE (97%); ASIA (91%); MALAYSIA (88%); TAIWAN (79%)

**LOAD-DATE:** February 20, 2013

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

A faster, cheaper transport option to KL; Impact will be felt most by low-cost airlines plying S'pore-KL route:  
Expert The Straits Times (Singapore) February 21, 2013 Thursday

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Channel NewsAsia

September 9, 2013 Monday 12:48 PM GMT

## Mixed reactions over changes to COE

**BYLINE:** Dylan Loh

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 552 words

SINGAPORE: The changes to the Certificate of Entitlement system drew mixed reactions, with several car dealers saying it does not solve the problem of tight supply. While premium models will be shifted to the big cars category, dealers said a limited quota of certificates will likely cause prices to remain high. Prospective car-buyers Channel NewsAsia spoke to said they will continue to observe the market before making any decisions. One of them, Vijay Sabapathy, intends to monitor car prices for three months after Certificate of Entitlement (COE) changes kick in from February 2014. The 33-year-old prospective buyer is looking for a mass market ride, but doubts prices will drop even with authorities taking premium models out of the small cars COE category using vehicle-horsepower and engine capacity as factors.

He said: "If you move one category of buyers out, it will just mean that the floodgates will be opened for everyone else who's waiting to buy a car to jump in." Others are more optimistic. Another prospective car buyer, Tseng Hsien Cho, said: "Hopefully this measure will allow the mass public from the middle sector, from the middle-income group, to have a chance to own a car." Once the changes are in place, car dealers said mass market Japanese models, which have been on a popularity decline in recent times, may make a comeback. Dealers of performance vehicles meanwhile, expect a "crowding effect" in the COE Category B section for big cars. Henry Heng, manager of Prime Cars, said: "There is very heavy traffic in the Cat B already. I think (the cost will) depend on how much COE they can give for Cat B." Future COE quotas then, will likely affect how high prices go for premium models. Raymond Tang, honorary secretary of the Singapore Vehicle Traders Association, said: "When there is more COE released, definitely the COE price will be more stable." Associate Professor **Lee Der-Hong**, a transport researcher with the National University of Singapore, said: "Perhaps we should consider a constant COE supply, which means maybe on an annual basis, we just have the 65,000 or 70,000 -- depending on the actual evaluation and testing." Observers expect cars which will eventually be shifted under the COE Category B section to enjoy healthy demand before changes take effect. Some even think big car COE prices may rise above the S\$100,000 mark, with more vehicles expected to be moved into the category. Dr Janil Puthuchery, a member of the Transport Government Parliamentary Committee, felt that the latest changes to the COE system are fair, and likely the best that can be currently achieved. Dr Janil said the COE system maintains the idea that cars are a luxury, rather than a necessity. However, he said the tweaks still make cars available to those who view them as a necessity. He also explained why some suggestions were dropped, such as a surcharge for those with more than one car. Dr Janil said: "Implementing a surcharge for multiple car ownership will be very difficult to police. There are many ways around it. But also, it affects a very small segment of the total car population. "It's not going to have a desired effect of making mass market car more accessible to the people whom Cat A was meant for. That's the fundamental thing we're trying to achieve here."Â

**SUBJECT:** NEW CAR DEALERS (90%); MOTOR VEHICLES (78%); PRICE CHANGES (78%); VEHICLE TRAFFIC (78%); AUTOMOBILE MFG (78%); PRICE INCREASES (72%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (61%); MIDDLE INCOME PERSONS (51%)

**LOAD-DATE:** September 9, 2013

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**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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Channel NewsAsia

July 26, 2012 Thursday 10:43 PM GMT

## Ducktours cries foul

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 894 words

SINGAPORE: After operating cruises along the Singapore River for the past four-and-a-half years, Singapore Ducktours will be stopping its HiPPO River Cruises in the area - not before crying foul over the Urban Redevelopment Authority's (URA) tender exercise after it did not win the bid to run water taxi services.

Among other things, it took issue with the emphasis on bid price instead of the bidder's track record and argued that the requirements - including the S\$3 price cap on the standard service.

Ducktours said this would make operations financially unsustainable, with potential annual losses of between S\$1 million and S\$1.6 million.

On Thursday, Ducktours, which also runs other cruises and tours in Singapore, took out an advertisement in this newspaper to inform readers that it is ceasing operations on the Singapore River in December.

Referring to the URA tender, which was put up in December last year, the advertisement stated: "We put forth a bid we believed was business sustainable. We lost."

On July 24, Ducktours set up a blog and published eight entries at one go to provide details of the tender that it took issue with.

It also put up an open letter - signed by Ducktours Chief Executive James Heng - to Prime Minister **Lee** Hsien Loong to appeal for a review of the tender, which has been awarded to Global Yellow Pages Limited & Leisure Empire Pte Ltd and Singapore River Cruise Pte Ltd.

According to Ducktours, the result of the tender was released on July 12. In the open letter, it said it had earlier written to Mr **Lee** and the Ministry of National Development on the issue.

"There should be more feasibility and market (studies) prior to crafting the tender requirements. Most would say we are a poor loser crying foul. But it is not so," it said.

The water taxi services will commence in January. When contacted, Ducktours Deputy Director Pamela Wee said it had little choice but to go public.

"We have only five months to move out of the river. We need to inform our trade partners and customers of our exit," said Ms Wee.

She added that the blog was set up to share, among other things, "the rationale behind our bid and the feedback we have given to the authorities".

Responding to MediaCorp's queries, a URA spokesman explained that the price cap on the river taxi services were needed to ensure affordability and encourage people to use the services when moving around the Singapore River and Marina Bay area.

He reiterated that the provisions of other services such as sightseeing cruises and themed boats were not subjected to price control under the URA's tender. This was to allow the interested operators to work out a financially viable proposal, he added.

URA received six proposals at the close of the tender.

"The number of bids received indicates that there was sufficient interest... by vendors who were confident they can run a viable business and meet all its requirements, mandatory or otherwise," the spokesman said.

Still, Ms Wee pointed out that services targeted at tourists will be cannibalised under the tender requirements.

She said: "With a S\$3 water taxi service available at all times, the tourist market (priced at S\$18) will be cannibalised. Tourists will opt for the more affordable S\$3 water taxi's DIY tour and tour agencies will also have the same problem of incorporating an S\$18 cruise into their tour package."

Ms Wee said that based on Ducktours' projections, the tourist market for river cruises "could crash by more than 50 per cent".

"As incumbent, we know the cost, we know the potential loss, we factored that into our bid and we were out-bid," she said.

The URA spokesman noted that the evaluation criteria were clearly set out in the tender documents "to ensure transparency to all interested parties".

"Care was taken to ensure suitable flexibility in the tender specifications... For example, a smaller vessel may be proposed for periods when there is less anticipated demand for the provision of on-demand services," the spokesman added.

The proposals were evaluated by an inter-agency committee made up of representatives from the PUB, Singapore Tourism Board and URA.

Their recommendation was then put up for review and approval by the Ministry of National Development's Tender Board which comprised the ministry's senior officers.

The URA spokesman said the tender was awarded "after careful evaluation which included study of the design of the routes offered and cost competitiveness".

Transport analysts said it was difficult to predict how a water transport system will fare here - given that it is untested.

Still, National University of Singapore (NUS) transport expert **Lee Der Horng** felt that Singapore's road traffic conditions "is not so bad for people to consider water taxis that seriously".

Citing examples of cities such as Bangkok and Hong Kong, Prof **Lee** said that the water taxi services worked in these places as the services are "not replaceable".

In fact, the water taxis actually help commuters in these places save time, he noted. "But in our local context... it's quite doubtful," he added.

But Dr Park Byung Joon, head of urban transport management programme at UniSIM's School of Business, felt that it was "pessimistic" for Ducktours to project just 300 daily passengers.

"It looks if they are overlooking the fact that such low fare may increase the number of leisure riders," he said.

-

Ducktours cries foul Channel NewsAsia July 26, 2012 Thursday 10:43 PM GMT

**SUBJECT:** CRUISES (90%); CONTRACTS & BIDS (90%); PRICE MANAGEMENT (89%); MARINE VESSELS (89%); MARINE PASSENGER TRANSPORT (78%); FERRIES (76%); YELLOW PAGES ADVERTISING (73%); BUSINESS CLOSINGS (68%); NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING (68%); PRINT ADVERTISING (68%); HEADS OF STATE & GOVERNMENT (65%); EXECUTIVES (65%); URBAN DEVELOPMENT (58%); ECONOMIC NEWS (58%); PRIME MINISTERS (50%)

**COMPANY:** GLOBAL YELLOW PAGES LTD (91%)

**TICKER:** Y07 (SGX) (91%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS511140 DIRECTORY & MAILING LIST PUBLISHERS (91%)

**PERSON:** **LEE** HSIEN LOONG (59%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE (93%) SINGAPORE (99%)

**LOAD-DATE:** July 26, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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TODAY (Singapore)

May 29, 2013 Wednesday  
APM Edition

## Car leasing firms ramp up efforts to woo motorists

**BYLINE:** Eugene Neubronner

**SECTION:** SGC; Singapore; Editors Pick; Pg. 28

**LENGTH:** 507 words

SINGAPORE - Car leasing firms are ramping up efforts to woo motorists with an alternative means to get their wheels, with Mercedes-Benz the latest to roll out a new leasing programme for up to seven years, offering customers a brand new ride without a high downpayment fee.

Cycle & Carriage Industries yesterday announced it had partnered Mercedes-Benz Financial Services (MBFS) Singapore to launch two new leasing programmes through MBFS' subsidiary, Daimler Fleet Management Singapore.

Leasing is akin to a long-term rental of a car, typically lasting two to five years, with the consumer paying instalments to the lease company.

It is usually aimed at companies or expatriates here on short-term stays of a few years, but the sector is now looking to target private motorists as well.

Mercedes-Benz said its seven-year lease is the longest lease tenure in the market.

The company said given fluctuations in the car market - such as curbs on bank loans introduced by the Monetary Authority of Singapore in February - a fixed monthly lease rate can remove the risks associated to the future value of the car and could prove to be "a cost-effective way" to driving here.

It is offering customers the option of trading in their cars while retaining their existing No-Claim Discount for up to a maximum of five years as well as their vehicle plate number.

Companies in the car leasing segment interviewed were generally upbeat about the market, with most saying they had noticed an uptick in enquiries from the public in recent months.

Wearnes Automotive - which handles brands such as Volvo and Renault - said enquiries for its leasing programme launched last month rose to "close to 100" from "about 10 to 15" after advertisements were ran.

Meanwhile, Sime Darby Services said it received "about 70 calls" over the first weekend when it began rolling out its own offers about a month ago. Sime Darby General Manager Eddie Ho said there appears to

Car leasing firms ramp up efforts to woo motorists TODAY (Singapore) May 29, 2013 Wednesday

be a "ready market".

The allure for drivers, said Mr Ho, is the flexibility leasing offers them - either by switching to a new car model every few years or not being weighed down by the "potential risks tied to a long-term hire purchase agreement" and car maintenance agreements.

Transportation researcher **Lee Der Horng** said the surge in interest could be due to the recent curbs in car loans. Noting that the idea of leasing a car is not new - even "dominating" elsewhere, such as America - he expressed caution about a rise in demand in the segment.

Vehicle Rental Association of Singapore Vice-President Tan Keng Hua added that most Singaporeans preferred to own their cars and that for longer periods, "you might be better off buying".

Dr **Lee**, an associate professor at the National University of Singapore's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, would not rule out the possibility that the uptick in the car leasing segment may lead to an increase in Certificate of Entitlement premiums, as it will give "more momentum" for the car leasing companies to be "more aggressive in bidding".

**SUBJECT:** AUTOMOBILE LEASING (92%); LEASING INDUSTRY (92%); LEASE AGREEMENTS (90%); AUTOMOBILE FINANCING (78%); NEW CAR MODELS (78%); SALES FINANCING (78%); CAPITAL EQUIPMENT LEASING (78%); NEW PRODUCTS (77%); BANKING & FINANCE (76%); CONSUMER LENDING (75%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (68%); CENTRAL BANKS (67%); CONSUMER GOODS RENTAL (58%) Transport

**COMPANY:** MERCEDES-BENZ LEASING GMBH (92%); CYCLE & CARRIAGE INDUSTRIES (1986) PTE LTD (58%)

**INDUSTRY:** SIC7515 PASSENGER CAR LEASING (92%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (94%)

**LOAD-DATE:** May 28, 2013

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

83 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

September 24, 2012 Monday

## **Rail expansion plan on track: LTA; It's on schedule to open one new rail project a year with exception of 2018**

**BYLINE:** christopher tan Senior Correspondent

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 579 words

EVEN though the completion date for the Thomson MRT Line has been pushed back, Singapore's rail expansion plan is still on track, said the Land Transport Authority (LTA).

According to the LTA's 2008 Land Transport Master Plan, the Thomson Line was supposed to be up by 2018.

But last month, the Government said that the line - which links commuters from Woodlands in the north to the new downtown in Marina Bay - would open in stages only from 2019 to 2021.

One reason given for the longer timeline was that the line, at 30km, is 3km longer than originally planned, and it will have 22 stations - four more than before.

In response to queries from The Straits Times, LTA deputy group director of planning Lina Lim said timelines announced for rail lines are "indicative".

"The finalised alignments, number of stations and timelines for new lines can only be firmed up after detailed engineering studies are completed to determine the potential challenges of constructing the line such as difficult soil conditions," she said.

"This process requires extensive work by LTA, and other relevant planning agencies."

She said that most other lines announced in the 2008 master plan are on schedule.

"With the exception of 2018, we are on track to open one new rail project a year," she said.

She gave the following update on when various parts of the rail expansion plan will be ready:

- o 2013: Downtown Line Stage 1 from Bugis to Marina Bay
- o 2014: North-South Line Extension linking the new Marina Bay Cruise Centre to the MRT network
- o 2015: Downtown Line Stage 2 linking the Bukit Timah corridor to Marina Bay
- o 2016: Tuas West Extension linking the Tuas industrial estate to the MRT network
- o 2017: Downtown Line Stage 3, linking Tampines to Marina Bay
- o 2019: Thomson Line Stage 1, from Woodlands North to Woodlands South
- o 2020: Thomson Line Stage 2, from Springleaf to Caldecott
- o 2021: Thomson Line Stage 3, from Mount Pleasant to Gardens by the Bay.

Rail expansion plan on track: LTA; It's on schedule to open one new rail project a year with exception of 2018 The Straits Times (Singapore) September 24, 2012 Monday

Ms Lim said Singapore's completed rail network has grown from 138km in 2008 to about 178km today.

She noted that rail density is about 33.8km of track per one million residents. This was comparable to major cities such as Hong Kong, where it is about 31.1km per million, and Tokyo, where it is about 34.5km per million.

However, National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der-Hong** said that while these comparative figures are valid in terms of fixed rail tracks, they "do not necessarily translate to actual capacity".

He noted that trains in Hong Kong, for instance, have eight carriages while those in Singapore range from three to six cars.

He also pointed out that there seems to be better integrated land use and transport planning in Hong Kong, which means rail accessibility and connectivity are far better than in many other cities. "If we actually have performed that well, but we are still suffering from congested trains, then something has gone very wrong," Dr **Lee** said.

Ms Lim of the LTA said it is not stopping at rolling out new lines. "Even as we expand our rapid transit system network, we are working to improve the capacity of our existing network," she said.

She noted that the North-South and East-West lines' signalling system will be upgraded progressively from 2016 to 2018, while new trains for various existing lines will also be delivered in the medium term.

All this will enable the older lines to increase their passenger capacity, she said.

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**SUBJECT:** RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (90%); TRANSPORTATION PLANNING (90%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (89%); RAILROAD MAINTENANCE (89%); LAND USE PLANNING (78%); CITY LIFE (76%); MARINAS (71%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE (94%) SINGAPORE (95%); HONG KONG (90%)

**LOAD-DATE:** September 23, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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Channel NewsAsia

March 29, 2013 Friday 1:41 PM GMT

## Consumers to gain if private car rental scheme liberalised: GPC

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 359 words

SINGAPORE: The Government Parliamentary Committee (GPC) for Transport has welcomed the possibility of liberalising the Private Car Rental Scheme, saying consumers will benefit from more competition.

But it also suggested that authorities carefully watch the impact on road congestion if private car rental is liberalised during peak periods.

A more relaxed scheme also means additional opportunities for car owners to get some money back from the high cost of vehicle ownership in Singapore.

iCarsclub is an online peer-to-peer private car rental business where one can find cars for rent for under S\$10 an hour - slightly pricier than renting a bicycle at some parks.

Of course, there is Electronic Road Pricing and fuel costs to consider.

And under current rules, private cars can only be rented out around the weekends and public holidays.

iCarsclub has proposed to authorities to allow weekday rentals.

The company estimates that a motorist can make S\$1,000 monthly renting out his personal vehicle under current rules.

The amount can be doubled or tripled, if regulations are relaxed, said Eddy Zhang, co-founder and CEO of iCarsclub.

"If the community really sees peer-to-peer car sharing as a norm, and everybody adopts the sharing activity, we can really achieve what the research has shown. The research shows one car for sharing can reduce six to 13 car purchases, at the same time reduce carbon dioxide emission generated by car usage by 40 per cent," he said.

Things aren't that simple, though.

Transport researcher at NUS, Associate Professor **Lee Der Horng**, thinks there are psychological and behavioural obstacles in the way of widespread community car sharing.

He said: "Just by looking at how we use our own car, realistically speaking, we always have quite a bit of the personal belongings in our car. But if today you want to get your car to be used by another person, I think, usually, we like to remove those personal belongings and this may cause certain hindrance."

iCarsclub, however, thinks around five per cent of car owners, or 30,000 out of the 600,000-odd private vehicles in Singapore, will subscribe to the concept of community car sharing.

Consumers to gain if private car rental scheme liberalised: GPC Channel NewsAsia March 29, 2013 Friday  
1:41 PM GMT

**SUBJECT:** PSYCHOLOGY (70%); EMISSIONS (69%); HOLIDAYS & OBSERVANCES (54%);  
EXECUTIVES (52%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (95%)

**LOAD-DATE:** March 29, 2013

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**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

September 14, 2012 Friday

## **External team to audit SMRT project; Safety consultant sought by LTA for \$195m plan to replace signalling systems**

**BYLINE:** royston sim

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 501 words

THE Land Transport Authority (LTA) will engage an independent consultant to conduct a safety audit of a project to replace signalling systems on the North-South and East-West MRT lines.

This is the first time the authority has sought an external safety consultant to audit a project carried out by either rail operator.

In response to queries, an LTA spokesman said: "The objective is to bring in an external safety check where a consultant will audit the signalling project's compliance with safety standards and provide an assessment on critical areas to be improved."

The \$195 million project will see SMRT replace its signalling system with newer technology that allows trains to run at shorter intervals of 100 seconds, down from 120 seconds.

The spokesman said the audit will start next year and last throughout the replacement project, which will be completed in phases from 2016 to 2018.

A tender seeking a consultant has been called. Key members of the audit team must have at least 10 years of experience in the relevant areas of automatic mass rapid transit systems.

Observers note that similar external safety audits have been done on major rail projects in the past as part of the LTA's Project Safety Review process.

Mr Rajan Krishnan, chief executive of engineering firm Kok Thong Holdings, said: "It's always good practice for any major project to have a third party to do a safety audit and ensure all processes and procedures are followed."

Transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** from the National University of Singapore felt the move is necessary, given the critical nature of the signalling system in train operations.

The reliability of the MRT network has come under scrutiny after a string of lengthy disruptions since last year.

There were two major breakdowns on the North-South Line last December, and commuters were hit by lengthy delays on the newer North-East and Circle lines this year.

Just last month, tens of thousands of commuters had their journeys prolonged when a broken U-shaped bolt

External team to audit SMRT project; Safety consultant sought by LTA for \$195m plan to replace signalling systems The Straits Times (Singapore) September 14, 2012 Friday

led to a tunnel closure on the North-East Line.

Mr Rajan viewed these incidents as isolated cases and said that he does not see any system- wide problems.

The LTA spokesman noted that it has introduced more prescriptive maintenance requirements for operators, in a bid to raise the MRT network's reliability.

Besides having to carry out annual internal audits, rail operators SMRT and SBS Transit will have to engage independent auditors every three years to assess their maintenance regimes, he said.

These moves are also in reaction to recommendations issued by the Committee of Inquiry formed to look into the major disruptions in December.

The MRT network will expand from about 149km now to 230km by 2021, with the Downtown and Thomson lines due in the coming years. The alignment of the 22-station, 30km Thomson Line was announced last month.

MRT ridership has grown steadily over the years.

From January to June, daily numbers climbed by 8.5 per cent to 2.61 million.

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**SUBJECT:** RAIL TRAFFIC CONTROL (90%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (90%); CONSULTING SERVICES (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (90%); AUDITS (89%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (78%); ENGINEERING (78%); RAILROAD MAINTENANCE (76%); ACCOUNTING (73%); HOLDING COMPANIES (70%); INVESTIGATIONS (69%); EXECUTIVES (51%)

**LOAD-DATE:** September 13, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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TODAY (Singapore)

July 12, 2013 Friday  
APM Edition

## Smart fails to keep licence, will fold

**BYLINE:** Sumita D/O Sreedharan

**SECTION:** HNP; Singapore; Editors Pick; Pg. 4

**LENGTH:** 699 words

**HIGHLIGHT:** Taxi operator could not meet new service standards, leading some to ask if they are too strict

SINGAPORE - Commuters will soon have one less taxi company to turn to after the Land Transport Authority (LTA) announced yesterday that it would not be renewing the licence of Smart, one of Singapore's smallest operators.

The LTA said the decision not to renew the licence, due to expire in September, was because of the company's failure to meet service standards, such as safety and inspection rates, over the past two-and-a-half years.

The operator, one of three companies that entered the market after it was liberalised in 2003, has also shown a lack of commitment to meet regulatory requirements, such as submitting key documents, said the LTA.

In addition, Smart shrank its fleet from 701 taxis in January last year to 517 seven months later and to 268 last month, instead of increasing it to meet the minimum fleet size requirement of 800 taxis.

Yesterday's announcement raised questions on whether the new service standards are too stringent for smaller operators and if the market is poised for a shake-up.

Smart was among two small operators here that failed new stipulated standards that kicked in this year. They essentially require a proportion of a company's fleet to ply the roads during peak hours and to clock a minimum daily mileage of 250km.

Besides Smart, Prime Taxis failed on both counts every month in the first four months of the year. Only Comfort and CityCab - both owned by ComfortDelGro, with a combined fleet of 16,200 taxis - met both the peak hour and daily mileage standards.

Smart Managing Director Johnny Harjantho said the company failed to meet the service standards due to its

Smart fails to keep licence, will fold TODAY (Singapore) July 12, 2013 Friday

small fleet. High Certificate of Entitlement premiums in recent months also meant that the operator faced difficulty in growing its fleet.

Associate Professor **Lee Der-Hong**, a transport analyst, called the overall operating environment "challenging" for the small and medium-sized fleets, as the size could limit their revenue and hence the stipulated standards would have a greater effect on the smaller players.

Premier Taxis was reported to have spent "a few million dollars" to put a satellite-based taxi dispatch system in place - one of the requirements operators must meet.

Transport economist Anthony Chin, however, felt that if a company is unable to meet the market's demands, it should exit the industry. "It doesn't matter how many companies there are as long as commuters are able to get a cab when they need one," he said.

According to the LTA, Smart had indicated its intention to exit the market earlier this year. Mr Harjantho yesterday said his priority would be to take care of the company's existing 300 drivers and to ensure that their contracts are honoured if they are taken on by another operator.

However, he declined to name the companies Smart is currently in talks with to take over its fleet and drivers. About 70 per cent of its cabs are due to be scrapped in the next six months.

Three Smart cabbies interviewed said they have not been informed by the company and expressed concern over their futures. Mr Kelvin Tan, who has been with Smart for five years, said he hoped for a smooth transition and that the authorities would step in to aid the drivers if necessary.

The National Taxi Association, the union representing taxi drivers, said cabbies affected should not be left in the lurch and their interests should be addressed.

Member of Parliament Ang Hin Kee, who is also an adviser to the union, urged the LTA to exercise its influence, saying that any licensing terms should ensure that resources are put in to assist taxi drivers whose livelihood will be affected.

He added that the LTA had been requested to set up a hotline for affected drivers to help address any issues.

Both SMRT and TransCab said they were monitoring the situation and were open to adding the taxis and drivers to their fleets.

ComfortDelGro, Premier and Prime did not respond to requests for comment.

LTA Chief Executive Chew Hock Yong said it is open to new players entering the market if they are able to contribute to the taxi industry.

He assured commuters that there will be no major impact on taxi availability and they will feel no difference when they try to flag down cabs.

**SUBJECT:** TAXICABS & LIMOUSINES (90%); TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (78%); LICENSES & PERMITS (72%) Transport

**COMPANY:** COMFORTDELGRO CORP LTD (54%)

**TICKER:** C52 (SGX) (54%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS485310 TAXI SERVICE (54%); NAICS485210 INTERURBAN & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (54%); SIC4131 INTERCITY & RURAL BUS TRANSPORTATION (54%); SIC4121 TAXICABS (54%)

Smart fails to keep licence, will fold TODAY (Singapore) July 12, 2013 Friday

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (93%)

**LOAD-DATE:** July 12, 2013

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**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

November 2, 2012 Friday

## SMU to start classes earlier in bid to ease congestion

**BYLINE:** matthias chew

**SECTION:** TOP OF THE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 418 words

AN EXTRA 15 minutes in bed may seem a lot to give up for some students.

But Singapore Management University (SMU) has decided it is worth the sacrifice to help ease the rush-hour transport burden.

It is starting classes at 8.15am instead of 8.30am, in a bid to "alleviate nationwide concern over the morning transport crunch".

The earlier start will also give students a longer break between lessons and the chance to enrol in back-to-back classes, according to the university.

But not all students are happy. Between 40 and 50 of them complained to the school's students' association, said its president Ada Chua, 21.

She said about half were upset at the earlier start, with the rest saying they were not properly consulted about the change, to take place from January.

The university, located in Bras Basah, first announced the move in an e-mail to its roughly 7,200 students on Sept 20.

Vice-provost for undergraduate programmes Pang Yang Hoong later e-mailed them to say that after speaking to student leaders, the university had agreed to ease the impact of the policy by implementing it in stages. To start with, it will affect half of all morning classes. Only from the August 2013 academic year will all lessons start at 8.15am.

Checks with educational institutions in the city area showed that SMU is the only one so far to change its start times.

But experts told The Straits Times that beginning classes 15 minutes earlier was unlikely to reduce congestion on its own.

National University of Singapore's Associate Professor **Lee Der Hornng** said the 7.30am to 8.30am period was very busy in general and starting classes later, say, at 9am would be a better option.

But The Straits Times understands SMU's seminar-based system meant its timetable was too packed to consider starting later.

Independent transport analyst Tham Chen Munn said a few thousand students no longer travelling at peak time "might help ease congestion in the local area, but would not have a significant impact on congestion at

SMU to start classes earlier in bid to ease congestion The Straits Times (Singapore) November 2, 2012  
Friday

an overall systems level".

More than 41,000 people have signed up for a scheme that rewards MRT passengers who travel during off-peak hours.

In a statement yesterday, the Land Transport Authority also announced that it has doubled the Incentives for Singapore's Commuters scheme's maximum cash prize to \$200.

Passengers travelling during the weekday off-peak periods of 6.30am to 7.30am and 8.30am to 9.30am earn credits that can be exchanged for a chance to win the cash prizes.

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**SUBJECT:** STUDENTS & STUDENT LIFE (93%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (78%); EDUCATION SYSTEMS & INSTITUTIONS (78%); COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (78%); UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION (78%); NEWS BRIEFS (74%); STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS (73%); EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (73%); TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (72%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (94%)

**LOAD-DATE:** November 1, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

August 6, 2011 Saturday

## 'Reality check' done on transport operators' finances; Returns not excessive compared with similar companies, says council

**SECTION:** PRIME NEWS

**LENGTH:** 421 words

THE Public Transport Council (PTC) conducted a 'reality check' on the two transport operators' financial performance before approving the latest fare change.

Its verdict? Their returns, expressed as a percentage of their total assets employed, 'were not considered excessively high' when compared with companies with similar industry structures and risk profiles.

The PTC said that the Return on Total Assets (Rota), which is an indicator of profitability, of both SBS Transit and SMRT Corp were 7.8 and 11.2 per cent respectively for 2010.

The Rota of companies such as Hong Kong's Transport International Holdings and MTR, London's Stagecoach Group, and Singapore's SembCorp Industries and SingPost, ranged from 3 to 14.9 per cent, it noted.

This reality check is done above and beyond a fare adjustment formula set in 2005 by a Fare Review Committee chaired by Mr Ong Kian Min, who was then the head of the Government Parliamentary Committee (GPC) for Transport.

The formula hinges on Singapore's inflation rate, wage increase and the productivity of the two transport operators.

According to this formula, this year's fare increase could have been as high as 2.8 per cent.

Critics, however, have pointed out that the formula has a time lag and therefore lacks currency. Others reckon the formula may have lost some of its relevance over the years.

Mr Cedric Foo, who now chairs the GPC for Transport, is advocating a review of the formula.

'Public transport must be efficient, comprehensive and affordable. The fare formula must gel with these values,' he said yesterday.

'We must not begrudge the operators their returns. But what is a reasonable return, given their risk of investment'

He said players in the Singapore public transport arena are not exposed to fare volatility or volume volatility.

Transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** of the National University of Singapore concurs. He indicated that service quality could be part of a new fare adjustment formula. He also said the authorities should consider if there is a need to separate bus and train fare adjustment criteria.

'Reality check' done on transport operators' finances; Returns not excessive compared with similar companies, says council The Straits Times (Singapore) August 6, 2011 Saturday

Both men, however, said the latest fare increase of 1 per cent was not excessive. Mr Foo said: 'The most heartening is the move to extend senior citizen concession to the whole day.'

But he added that polytechnic students should be granted the same concession as junior college students. They currently pay tertiary student fares.

'This is something that the GPC will push for,' he said.

#### **CHRISTOPHER TAN**

**SUBJECT:** HOLDING COMPANIES (90%); APPROVALS (89%); STUDENTS & STUDENT LIFE (85%); COLLEGE STUDENTS (77%); WAGES & SALARIES (77%); INFLATION (67%); ECONOMIC NEWS (67%); COMMUNITY COLLEGES (67%)

**COMPANY:** TRANSPORT INTERNATIONAL HOLDINGS LTD (57%); SEMBCORP INDUSTRIES LTD (56%); STAGECOACH GROUP PLC (56%)

**TICKER:** 0062 (HKSE) (57%); U96 (SGX) (56%); SGC (LSE) (56%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS485510 CHARTER BUS INDUSTRY (57%); SIC4141 LOCAL BUS CHARTER SERVICE (57%); NAICS336611 SHIP BUILDING & REPAIRING (56%); NAICS221310 WATER SUPPLY & IRRIGATION SYSTEMS (56%); SIC8711 ENGINEERING SERVICES (56%); SIC1629 HEAVY CONSTRUCTION NEC (56%); NAICS485113 BUS & OTHER MOTOR VEHICLE TRANSIT SYSTEMS (56%); NAICS485112 COMMUTER RAIL SYSTEMS (56%); SIC4111 LOCAL & SUBURBAN TRANSIT (56%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (93%); HONG KONG (79%)

**LOAD-DATE:** August 5, 2011

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

89 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

August 24, 2010 Tuesday

## **More Singaporeans own at least two cars; More than 34,000 people with more than one car to their names**

**BYLINE:** Cheryl Ong & Maria Almenoar

**LENGTH:** 791 words

THIS may be the world's most expensive place to own a car, but it is not stopping more people from buying a second one or even a third.

Land Transport Authority (LTA) figures show 6.8 per cent of car owners here have two or more cars, up from 5.5 per cent just four years ago. This translates into 34,226 people with more than one car to their names as of June.

This has caused a crunch on the number of parking spaces available.

It is not just the well-off who own more than one car. Parking spaces in the carparks in Housing Board estates are also getting hard to come by. Increasingly, residents have to park farther away from their flats or park illegally.

When the HDB looked into complaints over this, it found 36,370 households owning more than one car - 60 per cent more than in 2006, when 22,700 did.

Transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** of the National University of Singapore said the trend is a sign that people have come to see a car as a necessity, not a luxury.

He said he had expected the demand for cars to fall, given the Government's drive to promote public transport and the expected hike in certificate of entitlement (COE) prices because of the limited supply of COEs available now.

He said: 'If people believe in this lifestyle of having more cars, to satisfy that, they'll convince themselves that the price of a COE is an acceptable percentage of their disposable income.'

He added that this suggested the Government's message to people to use public transport may not be getting through.

COE premiums now stand at \$30,000 to \$40,000, higher than in recent years, when they dipped below \$20,000; but they are still cheaper now than when they hit \$100,000 back in the 1990s.

Car dealers and owners cite a slew of reasons people have more than one car: Couples may each need their own car to get to work, or a non-working spouse may need one for errands.

And then there are parents who register a second car in their names but let their children drive it, to save on insurance premiums for newer drivers.

Sometimes, people buy another car because they can. Take for example a man who indulges himself with a second car, usually a sports car, said managing director Eddie Loo of used-car dealership Car Times.

More Singaporeans own at least two cars; More than 34,000 people with more than one car to their names  
The Straits Times (Singapore) August 24, 2010 Tuesday

Another factor is the launch of cheaper China-made cars, which make for affordable second cars.

The HDB said it will add 5,000 more parking spaces to the existing 500,000 in the next three years to ease the squeeze.

Pasir Ris resident C. Ong, 23, drives her family's second car, which her father bought when she started her studies in Nanyang Technological University.

Parking spaces are scarce by the time she gets home in the evening though she has a season parking ticket, so she sometimes parks illegally and risks a fine.

Sembawang resident Valerie Toh, 23, also an undergraduate, said her parents each drive their own car and see their wheels as a necessity. Parking spaces are a rare find after 6pm, but they put up with it, she said.

Those who own just one car are also vexed. Engineer Henry Chew, 38, of Tampines Street 71, said the multi-storey carpark near his block is always nearly full by 10pm on weekdays.

The squeeze is on in condominiums and private estates too; some condo managements have resorted to making residents ballot for spaces or charging them for a second parking spot.

In a private estate in Lorong Marzuki last week, cars were parked on both sides of a road with double yellow lines. To avoid parking fines, residents parked just outside their gates, so motorists using the road had to inch their way forward.

Dr Lim Wee Kiak, chairman of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport and an MP for Sembawang GRC, suggested raising carpark charges, which Associate Professor **Lee** said may work to discourage people from driving to work or downtown.

A survey last month, comparing parking charges across 145 cities, found Asia's most expensive parking spaces in Tokyo and Hong Kong - at \$74 and \$38 a day respectively.

It costs an average of \$29 a day to park in prime areas such as Shenton Way and Orchard Road.

Prof **Lee** said that in the suburbs, parking charges could be pegged to the number of cars one owns, with multi-car owners paying higher rates.

But Ms **Lee** Bee Wah, an MP for Ang Mo Kio GRC, doubts this will work. She said: 'If residents spend so much on a car, they'll pay for parking even if it's expensive. The solution is twofold - we have to improve public transport and manage the car population.'

This means ensuring that even private estates are served by buses and trains, and further reducing the supply of COEs.

'If people think public transport is more affordable and efficient, they will consider it a more viable alternative to buying a car,' she said.

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**SUBJECT:** USED CAR DEALERS (78%); MOTOR VEHICLES (73%); HOUSING AUTHORITIES (72%); PARKING OFFENSES (70%); PERSONAL & FAMILY INCOME (68%); INSURANCE PREMIUMS (63%); NEW CAR DEALERS (61%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** HENAN, CHINA (58%) CHINA (58%)

**LOAD-DATE:** August 23, 2010

More Singaporeans own at least two cars; More than 34,000 people with more than one car to their names  
The Straits Times (Singapore) August 24, 2010 Tuesday

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

September 30, 2013 Monday

## **NUS looking for solution to shuttle bus squeeze; NTU due to test driver-free buggies to ferry students around campus**

**BYLINE:** Royston Sim

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 553 words

STUDENTS travelling to and from lectures may no longer have to squeeze into packed buses under plans for a possible new transport network at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

The school wants developers to propose an "efficient, reliable, sustainable and environmentally friendly" system for the Kent Ridge campus and University Town (UTown).

This could involve anything from new, airport-style buses to an electric bicycle sharing system, experts told The Straits Times.

It would provide an alternative to the current shuttle bus service, which can get overcrowded during peak periods, when throngs of students finish lectures or arrive from Kent Ridge MRT station.

The system should offer shorter waiting and travel times, be cost effective and provide greater comfort and accessibility, the university said in its tender specifications. Students should also be connected to the nearby MRT station and public bus network.

NUS is not the only Singapore school studying alternative transport solutions. Nanyang Technological University is due to test driver-free buggies, which could be used to ferry students around.

At the nearby one-north business park, JTC Corp plans to conduct a feasibility study of a People Mover System that would serve as a last-mile connection from the MRT station. Possibilities include having driverless trams on an elevated track.

But Dr Alexander Erath, a transport researcher at Future Cities Laboratory, said this option might not be suitable for NUS as it does not have the capacity to cope with the peaks and troughs in demand at the university.

NUS doctoral student Sun Lijun said the current bus system can be severely congested when classes end and many people end up waiting at the same bus stop. Some older buses also have steps at the entrance and exit, slowing down those getting on or off.

However, the situation has become better since NUS improved its bus service this semester, said undergraduate Goh Xiang Ling, 21. The pharmacy major takes the shuttle bus from Kent Ridge station to UTown for classes.

She said: "I used to wait for the second or third bus and try to squeeze onto it, but a new direct service from the science (faculty) to UTown has really helped a lot."

NUS looking for solution to shuttle bus squeeze; NTU due to test driver-free buggies to ferry students around campus The Straits Times (Singapore) September 30, 2013 Monday

Dr Erath said it is critical to study the current and future demand at NUS and then think creatively about how to manage it.

For instance, staggering lecture times could prevent a peak- hour crush. Other options include building a pedestrian or cycling tunnel through Kent Ridge linking to the MRT station, or installing an electric bicycle sharing system.

NUS transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** suggested replacing the shuttle buses with higher- capacity types used at airports, which have low floors and few or no seats. Parking spaces could also be reconfigured to make the campus more compact.

"Today, the most convenient stops are reserved for carparks, not buses," said Dr **Lee**.

An NUS spokesman confirmed that it is "at the preliminary stage of exploring feasible and viable long-term alternative solutions to improve mobility on campus".

She said the exercise, which will take some time, is part of ongoing efforts to improve campus facilities and services. In the meantime, the university will continue to refine its internal shuttle bus service on a regular basis.

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**SUBJECT:** SHUTTLE BUS & VANPOOL SERVICES (90%); MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (90%); STUDENTS & STUDENT LIFE (89%); AIRPORTS (78%); BUS STATIONS & TERMINALS (78%); CYCLING (76%); PARKING SPACES & FACILITIES (71%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** HENAN, CHINA (58%); HUNAN, CHINA (58%) CHINA (58%)

**LOAD-DATE:** September 29, 2013

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

August 27, 2010 Friday

## **Next stop for MRT stations: Second Link; Line part of forked Tuas extension from East-West line**

**BYLINE:** Christopher Tan, Senior Correspondent

**LENGTH:** 736 words

THE MRT will be extended to the Second Link by 2015.

The Straits Times understands the line will be part of the East-West Line's forked Tuas extension - a 14km above-ground stretch on which work could start in the second half of next year, and be completed in 2015.

The branch leading to the Second Link will be completed first, with the other branch leading to the factories in Tuas South to follow, said sources.

Engineering drawings done last year show the line continuing westwards from Joo Koon station towards the Second Link, with four stops along the way.

The plans call for a rail viaduct rising 20m above ground, about twice the height of current elevated MRT tracks. This, an MRT first, will take the track above the Ayer Rajah Expressway/Pan-Island Expressway intersection.

At some point, the rail viaduct will run along a road viaduct - another first.

The Transport Ministry said alignment of the extension has not been finalised, but confirmed that a stop will be sited near the Second Link.

It ruled out extending the East-West line to Johor from the Second Link station.

Plans for a cross-border metro extension, to be ready in 2018, were announced in May by Prime Minister **Lee** Hsien Loong and his Malaysian counterpart, Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

But observers say that because plans are for the extension to stop at Tanjung Puteri in Johor Baru, the line across is likely to be launched from the Woodlands station, not the Second Link.

Industry watchers said having an MRT line to the Second Link is crucial, even if it is not extended across the border.

Dr Lim Wee Kiak, who chairs the Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport, said the Second Link station offers commuters an alternative if the Causeway checkpoint gets too crowded.

For Resorts World Sentosa (RWS) spokesman Robin Goh, having an MRT station at the Second Link - and as soon as 2015 - may well translate into more Malaysian customers visiting the resort, principally, its casino.

He said a station there will attract more free-and-independent travellers, who now make up about half of the visitors to RWS. As it is, 20 to 30 bus-loads of Malaysians now go there on an average weekday, 'and a bit more on weekends', he said.

Next stop for MRT stations: Second Link; Line part of forked Tuas extension from East-West line The Straits Times (Singapore) August 27, 2010 Friday

Sources said the Second Link stop could also be a train depot for future MRT lines that connect to the East-West line's western tip.

Transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** of the National University of Singapore said, however, that to maximise the potential of a station at the Second Link, it will be critical to provide connectivity on both sides, 'so travellers will not end up in the middle of nowhere'.

On this front, a bus terminal for cross-border services could possibly be sited near the Second Link station.

Mr Sebastian Yap, the spokesman for the Executive Bus Agencies Association, said talks on moving the interstate bus terminal in Lavender Street have been going on for years now.

The recent announcement to set up a Downtown Line station in Jalan Besar has given added impetus to move the bus terminal out, given that the urban development around the station will need to be maximised.

But Mr Yap thinks Tuas is not the ideal new location.

Saying the association preferred Boon Lay, he said: 'A good terminal service is all about connectivity. Besides the MRT, we need taxis as well as public buses.'

Those working in Tuas are thrilled at the prospect of an MRT extension there.

Mr Mike Leong, a 30-year-old Malaysian who works at Daimler's logistics centre in Tuas and spends four hours each work day travelling between home in Johor's Gelang Patah and his workplace, is looking forward to a shorter commute.

Packed buses ferrying Malaysians enter Singapore via the Second Link daily and head for the Jurong East MRT station, from where company buses pick them up and drive them westwards again to Tuas. It is a circuitous trip which Mr Leong thinks 'wastes a lot of time'.

Raffles Country Club vice-president Lek Seow Yam said an MRT extension to Tuas would make it easier for businesses there to fill positions.

He said: 'It can be difficult to find people who want to work in Tuas because of the distance. An MRT line would also encourage more people to patronise the F&B places there.'

NUS' Dr **Lee** suggested that the Tuas extension could include Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

'If we can provide an airport extension, I see no reason why the MRT cannot be extended to NTU,' he added.

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**SUBJECT:** URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (87%); TERRITORIAL & NATIONAL BORDERS (87%); HEADS OF STATE & GOVERNMENT (70%); PRIME MINISTERS (65%)

**PERSON:** **LEE** HSIEN LOONG (55%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (93%); MALAYSIA (93%)

**LOAD-DATE:** August 26, 2010

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Next stop for MRT stations: Second Link; Line part of forked Tuas extension from East-West line The Straits Times (Singapore) August 27, 2010 Friday

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

November 14, 2013 Thursday

## **Undersea road opens in Dec, ECP to be cut off; This will free up land for new Central Business District**

**BYLINE:** Christopher Tan Senior Transport Correspondent

**SECTION:** TOP OF THE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 529 words

A 5KM partly undersea 10-lane road linking the Kallang-Paya Lebar Expressway (KPE), Ayer Rajah Expressway (AYE) and East Coast Parkway (ECP) will open on Dec29, freeing up land that will form a new Central Business District (CBD).

Costing \$4.3 billion and taking four years to build, the subterranean Marina Coastal Expressway (MCE) is touted as Singapore's 10th expressway, although it is more like an extension of the KPE.

The Land Transport Authority (LTA) said the MCE will provide direct access to the Marina downtown, as well as offer speedy east-west commutes - taking over a role of the ECP.

The southern part of the ECP will be downgraded to an arterial road serving the Marina area.

A 1km section leading from Marina Boulevard to Prince Edward Road will be removed to free up a 70ha land parcel.

LTA deputy chief executive Chua Chong Kheng said: "Without an expressway going through the area, we get a neat and size-able plot for development.

"Today, the ECP cuts the area into two."

Without the ECP dividing it, the new CBD also joins the old business district seamlessly.

The new downtown will boast a densely built-up precinct that is well connected by the MRT.

It is also envisioned to be a pedestrian and cyclist-friendly area, flanked by Gardens by the Bay, Marina Barrage and an international cruise centre.

"It will be a quality live-work- play precinct," Mr Chua said.

A number of road changes will be made to serve this area.

The downgraded section of the ECP - west of Sheares Bridge - will be renamed Sheares Avenue.

By the third quarter next year, Marina Boulevard and Central Boulevard, the two main roads in Marina South, will be straightened and expanded to form high- capacity roads leading to and from Shenton Way.

There will also be direct access to Maxwell Road from the area.

Undersea road opens in Dec, ECP to be cut off; This will free up land for new Central Business District The Straits Times (Singapore) November 14, 2013 Thursday

Motorists on the fringe will face changes too. The Fort Road connection to the ECP will be removed because there will be insufficient distance for motorists to filter into the highway when the MCE opens.

Those who use this access to go to the city will have to find other routes, such as via Nicoll Highway, or travel on the East Coast Park Service Road to make a U-turn to join the ECP farther east.

Electronic Road Pricing (ERP) gantries will also be re-positioned, to reflect the status of the expanded business district. But the LTA said most motorists will not pass more gantries than they do today.

But this does not apply to those driving from areas such as Bukit Timah and Serangoon, who rely on the Ophir Road connection to get to the west via the ECP. They will have to pass two gantries instead of one today.

National University of Singapore transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** said the changes will improve safety. Like other observers, he noted that the ECP stretch in the Marina area "is actually quite dangerous".

A number of serious accidents have occurred in recent months at the section before the Marina Bay Sands, including a fatal one involving a 30-year-old businessman driving a Lotus sports car.

Professor **Lee** added that removing a section of the ECP goes towards creating "a neater urban landscape, and orderly traffic flow".

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**SUBJECT:** REAL ESTATE (77%); CITY LIFE (75%); NEWS BRIEFS (74%); EXECUTIVES (70%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE (90%) SINGAPORE (92%)

**LOAD-DATE:** November 13, 2013

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

June 25, 2013 Tuesday

## Encouraging start to free MRT rides for early birds: LTA

**BYLINE:** Jermyn Chow

**SECTION:** TOP OF THE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 485 words

THE first day of free train rides into the city area for early birds got off to an "encouraging" start yesterday, said the Land Transport Authority (LTA).

Its figures show that the number of commuters tapping out of specified stations during the pre-peak hours of 7am to 7.45am shot up. It rose 25 per cent to nearly 29,000 against the daily average of 23,000 for the first three weeks of this month.

On the other hand, the number of commuters who tapped out during the 8am to 9am peak period fell to almost 86,000, a 9 per cent decline from 94,000.

The trial involves 16 MRT stations, including Raffles Place, Tanjong Pagar, Chinatown and City Hall.

A Straits Times poll of 70 commuters at five stations, however, found that only around 5 per cent of them got up earlier for the free ride yesterday, the first day of a trial effort to spread the morning peak-hour crowds.

But change takes time, said transport analysts. The LTA said it will monitor the changes in the next few months before drawing conclusions about any change in people's travel patterns.

The reason: Travel patterns take time to stabilise as employers and employees make adjustments in workplace and personal arrangements. "There may be daily fluctuations as well," said the LTA spokesman.

When the situation settles, studies will be done to determine how many people will start their journeys earlier, she said.

Agreeing, transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** of the National University of Singapore said it will take two to three months to gauge commuter response. "It is still the school holidays, and people take time to change and get used to new travelling habits."

The year-long trial by the Government, which is costing it \$10 million, also offers a 50 cent discount to those who tap out between 7.45am and 8am.

The number who did so fell as well, from 13,000 to 12,350 - a 5 per cent decline, said the LTA.

Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew has projected that the free rides could move 10,000 to 20,000 - or 10 per cent to 20 per cent - of train users away from the peak period.

Among yesterday's early birds was administrative assistant Elizabeth Anthony, who left her Sembawang home 15 minutes earlier.

Encouraging start to free MRT rides for early birds: LTA The Straits Times (Singapore) June 25, 2013  
Tuesday

The 58-year-old said: "Usually, I take a bus, but this is good savings which I can donate to charity... I will save about \$1.70 a day."

But the remaining 95 per cent preferred their sleep, like recruitment consultant Jimmy Ng.

The 31-year-old, who spends about \$50 a month on transport between Hougang and Raffles Place, said the savings are not substantial. He added: "I would rather sleep a bit more, and I don't mind squeezing a little on the train."

Auditor Josephine **Lee**, 24, said bosses need to implement staggered work hours for the scheme to work: "No point going to work earlier if my firm won't allow us to finish work early."

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Additional reporting by Natalie Kuan, Lim Min Zhang, Lester Wong, Farah Ismail

**SUBJECT:** TRAINS (89%); FUNDRAISING (88%); NEWS BRIEFS (74%); TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (73%); EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (65%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE (79%) SINGAPORE (79%)

**LOAD-DATE:** June 24, 2013

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

June 25, 2013 Tuesday

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Tuesday

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Additional reporting by Natalie Kuan, Lim Min Zhang, Lester Wong, Farah Ismail

**SUBJECT:** TRAINS (89%); FUNDRAISING (88%); NEWS BRIEFS (74%); TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (73%); EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (65%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE (79%) SINGAPORE (79%)

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

August 30, 2012 Thursday

## **New \$18b Thomson Line ready by 2019; It will have 22 stations - four more than originally planned**

**BYLINE:** Maria Almendoar Transport Correspondent

**SECTION:** TOP OF THE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 526 words

THE new Thomson Line, which will connect neighbourhoods in the north to the city, will have more stations, cover more ground and use longer trains.

When completed, Singapore's sixth rail project will have 22 stations spanning 30km - four stations and 3km longer than originally planned in 2008.

The fully underground, driverless system will also use a four-car system instead of a three-car system to meet greater demand in the long term.

These changes will, however, delay the start of the \$18 billion line by a year to 2019.

When fully operational, residents in estates like Sembawang, Nee Soon and Ang Mo Kio will be able to connect to all existing rail lines at six interchanges located at the Orchard, Woodlands, Caldecott, Marina Bay, Outram Park, and Stevens MRT stations.

It will also link with the future Eastern Region Line, due for completion in 2020.

The Thomson Line will open in three stages, starting with the three northernmost stations in Woodlands. The next six, from Springleaf to Caldecott, will open in 2020, followed by the last 13, from Mount Pleasant to Gardens by the Bay, in 2021.

Unveiling these details yesterday, Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew said that an estimated 400,000 commuters will ride the Thomson Line daily.

Many of them will be among the 160,000 households that will be located within 800m of a Thomson Line station, putting it at a 10 to 12 minute walk away.

These commuters are expected to be able to shorten commuting time by up to 50 per cent.

A ride from Sin Ming to Republic Polytechnic in Woodlands, for example, will take only 25 minutes, instead of 50 minutes now.

Travelling from the private landed housing estate of Springleaf to the Great World City shopping mall will take 25 minutes instead of 35 minutes.

A total of 13,000 sq m will be acquired by the Government to build the line. Four properties - Pearls Centre in Eu Tong Sen Street, the Upper Thomson post office, and two bungalows near Stevens Road - will be fully acquired. Five partial plots will also be acquired including the frontage of Singapore Chinese Girls' School in

New \$18b Thomson Line ready by 2019; It will have 22 stations - four more than originally planned The Straits Times (Singapore) August 30, 2012 Thursday

Dunearn Road.

The Singapore Land Authority did not specify how much these plots would cost the Government but described the compensation sum as "hundreds of millions".

MPs said yesterday the Thomson Line will be a welcome addition for many residents in the north who currently have difficulty accessing the rail network.

MP for Nee Soon GRC **Lee Bee Wah** said residents in the Springleaf estate have to take two buses to get to the nearest Khatib MRT.

"With more public transport options, this will hopefully relieve residents of their need to have a car and reduce the flow of traffic in the area," added Minister of State (Transport) Josephine Teo. She is also an MP for Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC, where the new Sin Ming station is located.

Transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** agreed that with many of the new stations located within private estates, some car owners could now opt for public transport instead.

"The Thomson Line will fill in the gaps in the northern areas where stations are now near but just not near enough," he said.

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SEE TOP OF THE NEWS

**SUBJECT:** RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION (89%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (89%); DELAYS & POSTPONEMENTS (78%); URBAN RAIL SYSTEMS (78%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (78%); VEHICLE TRAFFIC (76%); NEWS BRIEFS (74%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (71%)

**COMPANY:** SINGAPORE LAND LTD (52%)

**TICKER:** S30 (SGX) (52%)

**INDUSTRY:** NAICS551112 OFFICES OF OTHER HOLDING COMPANIES (52%); SIC6719 OFFICES OF HOLDING COMPANIES, NEC (52%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE (94%) SINGAPORE (94%)

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

October 31, 2008 Friday

## **Operators face fine if trains are late; Penalty up to \$1 million; maximum capacity per train also cut to 1,600**

**BYLINE:** Maria Almenoar

**LENGTH:** 645 words

TRAIN operators will now have to meet a new operating standard requiring that their trains arrive at stations on time, on pain of a fine.

The Land Transport Authority (LTA), which has till now checked only that the trains pull out of the depot on time, will now also monitor stations to ensure that trains run at their prescribed frequencies.

While experts welcomed this change, they raised questions on how crowdedness - another factor in the commuter's experience - was being measured.

Following an event at the Pioneer MRT station yesterday, Transport Minister Raymond Lim announced that the LTA was lowering the maximum number of passengers per train from 1,700 to 1,600.

But falling in line with this is going to be moot, because train operator SMRT has said even the most crowded trains have carried only 1,400 commuters.

Mr Seah Kian Peng, a member of the Government Parliamentary Committee (GPC) for Transport, said: 'It's a bit odd for them to make the standards higher than what the operators are already working at, but maybe the ministry is trying to approach this in steps and does not want it to be onerous to either operator.'

He added that it was important to review these standards regularly and 'listen to the ground'.

The deputy chairman of the GPC, Mr Ong Kian Min, said 'load capacities' were just numbers to commuters. 'The capacity should not be based on technical specifications but on the practical limit of comfort for commuters. If they feel they are packed like sardines, then we should listen to that feedback,' he said.

National University of Singapore (NUS) transport researcher **Lee Der-Hong** agreed, saying: 'It's important how the passengers view the system. If they have to squeeze on the train to get on it, then something must be done to change the perception.'

Some commuters felt the new standard would act as a check, but were more impressed with SMRT's announcement that it would remove 84 seats from 10 trains to create more standing room.

Bank executive S. Lalitha, 27, who travels from Admiralty to Novena at 8.10am on workdays, said: 'I don't really care if I get a seat - I just want to get on and get to work on time.'

While most commuters felt crowdedness was more of an issue than the waiting time between trains, the LTA is ensuring that operators run trains at the smallest possible intervals the system will allow for during peak hours.

This means that between 7.45am and 8.30am, the wait should be between two and three minutes. During

Operators face fine if trains are late; Penalty up to \$1 million; maximum capacity per train also cut to 1,600  
The Straits Times (Singapore) October 31, 2008 Friday

the lunch-hour peak, commuters at Raffles Place should see a train pull up every three to four minutes. Operators who fail to meet the LTA's time intervals will be fined between \$10,000 and \$1 million.

Stipulating time intervals between trains means that operators who claim that they are already achieving such time intervals cannot slacken, said Mr Ong.

He said that in Moscow, which he visited recently, the trains run at one-minute intervals, which 'may be something we can look into'. Over at Hong Kong, trains run at 1 1/2-minute intervals.

SMRT's chief executive Saw Phaik Hwa said Singapore's system can handle two-minute intervals at most, but this can be shortened if its signalling system was overhauled.

NUS' Professor Lee said: 'What LTA is doing is to show it's looking after passengers. That is important since it wants more people to take public transport.'

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Opening on Feb 28

Two more stations to come

PIONEER and Joo Koon, the new MRT stations in the western corner of the island, will open on Feb 28. They are elevated and extend 3.8km west of Boon Lay MRT station, now the last station on the East-West Line.

The 35,000 people living in Jurong West or working in Jurong Industrial Estate are expected to shave up to 15 minutes off their travelling time.

The Land Transport Authority said there is room for further extension westward from Joo Koon station.

MARIA ALMENOAR

**SUBJECT:** RAIL TRANSPORTATION (90%); FUNDRAISING (76%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (79%) SINGAPORE (79%)

**LOAD-DATE:** October 31, 2008

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

97 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

March 26, 2012 Monday

## MRT stations likely to get common 'bus shuttle' signs

**BYLINE:** Royston Sim

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE

**LENGTH:** 541 words

COMMUTERS could soon see standardised signs at all MRT stations across the rail network directing them to where they can board free shuttle buses during a train disruption.

Those signs could also have information on regular bus services that commuters can board to get to other stations.

The Straits Times understands that the Land Transport Authority (LTA) is working with operators SMRT and SBS Transit to design new signs guiding commuters to bus bridging points.

Sources say these signs, once finalised, will likely be put up at all stations and replace any existing signage.

Mock-up signs were spotted earlier this month at City Hall MRT station and its entrance in North Bridge Road.

These sample signs have directions to bus stops where commuters can take free shuttle buses towards Joo Koon, Woodlands, Marina Bay or Pasir Ris during a disruption. The signs also display which bus services commuters can board to get to other MRT stations.

In response to queries, an SMRT spokesman said the signs at City Hall were 'preliminary designs', and nothing has been finalised.

Even so, the mock-ups offer a hint as to what future signs at MRT stations could look like.

An LTA spokesman would confirm only that the authority is 'working with the public transport operators to put up more signage to guide commuters during a disruption'.

Earlier this month, Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew said in Parliament that 'plans are also under way to improve bus information provision at MRT stations, and to install signage to guide commuters to the designated bus bridging points'.

SMRT, which runs the North-South, East-West and Circle lines, has yet to install signs to guide commuters to designated bus bridging points.

The other operator, SBS Transit, has coloured signs at all of its North-East Line (NEL) stations informing commuters which exits to take to get to shuttle bus boarding points towards Punggol or HarbourFront.

Its senior vice-president of corporate communications Tammy Tan said the signs have been up since 2008.

When the North-South Line was hit by two major disruptions last December, commuters were frustrated by

MRT stations likely to get common 'bus shuttle' signs The Straits Times (Singapore) March 26, 2012 Monday

a lack of signs and directions for alternative transport.

And though both operators have made their regular bus services free for commuters who board at designated bus stops during a disruption since last month, many commuters did not know or did not use this free service when a stretch of the NEL was down for some 11 hours on March 15.

Ms Tan said SBS Transit staff are working on putting up bus service information posters in four languages to inform commuters which regular bus services they can take for free at affected stations to get to the other stations along the NEL.

Yet these signs could eventually be superseded by those being designed by the LTA.

Transport researcher **Lee Der Horng** from the National University of Singapore said having standardised signs across stations would reduce confusion among commuters during a disruption.

However, Dr **Lee** cautioned that having too much information on signage could overwhelm commuters and confuse them instead.

He said: 'The designers will have to prioritise what information they want to put out. With careful design, this can be done.'

**SUBJECT:** MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (92%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (90%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (90%); SHUTTLE BUS & VANPOOL SERVICES (90%); BUS STATIONS & TERMINALS (89%); EXECUTIVES (73%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE (92%) SINGAPORE (92%)

**LOAD-DATE:** March 25, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** Mock-up signs at City Hall station, with directions to bus stops where commuters can take bus bridging services to other stations during train disruptions. An SMRT spokesman said they were just 'preliminary designs' and nothing has been finalised. -- ST PHOTO: CHEW SENG KIM

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

98 of 190 DOCUMENTS

The Straits Times (Singapore)

January 21, 2012 Saturday

## **Bus liberalisation plan shelved for now; Govt will focus instead on getting operators to ramp up fleet sizes**

**BYLINE:** Christopher Tan, Senior Correspondent

**SECTION:** PRIME NEWS

**LENGTH:** 677 words

A PLAN to liberalise the public bus market by getting new and existing players to bid for the right to run services along routes looks stuck in neutral gear.

Instead of implementing this radical change to the industry, the Government will focus on ramping up fleet sizes to cope with fast-growing ridership.

The Ministry of Transport says the liberalisation plan - initiated in 2008 by former minister Raymond Lim to bring more competition into the bus market and keep operators on their toes - requires closer scrutiny.

The change, to have been in place in 2010, was to have cast the Land Transport Authority (LTA) as the master bus-route planner, which would eventually package routes in parcels for which bus operators would bid.

The LTA has since been made master bus-route planner, but the other half of the plan has been put on the back burner.

A Transport Ministry spokesman, responding to queries from The Straits Times, said: 'Bus tendering is a major decision and will involve a fundamental change in the industry. The LTA will need to ensure that it has minimal disruption to the commuters and that the industry is ready to participate meaningfully in the change.

'Therefore, the LTA will take a measured approach and take time to study the issues, as the aim is to bring additional benefits to the commuters.'

The ministry said the LTA will focus on reviewing bus services, which includes getting two bus operators, SBS Transit and SMRT Corp, to raise bus capacity 'significantly' over the next few years.

It will also study the outcomes of the review when determining the appropriate time to introduce bus tendering.

The Straits Times understands that bus liberalisation will not gain traction for at least four to five years - if at all.

The new development is not completely unexpected. Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew said last October that liberalisation was conceptually 'the right thing to do', but that it was not a straightforward process; its main difficulty lay in packaging routes into parcels that make sense.

Transport researcher **Lee Der-Horng** of the National University of Singapore said: 'For the public transport

Bus liberalisation plan shelved for now; Govt will focus instead on getting operators to ramp up fleet sizes  
The Straits Times (Singapore) January 21, 2012 Saturday

market, I'm not very keen on the idea of liberalisation. I feel a good regulatory system may suit Singapore better... to ensure desired performance indices are met.'

SBS Transit was unavailable for comment, but rival SMRT said it remained committed to raising its service standards and working closely with the authorities on the plan.

The very structure of the bus system was vigorously debated last July, following news of expected fare hikes. To calls by the opposition Workers' Party for the bus network to be nationalised, the Government said such a move was likely to lead to taxpayers and commuters paying more for poor service, and that commercially run services, being profit-motivated, were more efficient.

Cities from Dhaka to Dalian, London to Brisbane, and Sydney to Seoul have undertaken or are undertaking bus reforms, many involving local governments getting into route planning.

Seoul's bus reform of 2004 was a notable success. The South Korean capital dismantled a web of overlapping, uncoordinated direct services, implemented a hub-and-spoke network and introduced bus rapid transit, a dedicated bus corridor served by high-frequency services in high-demand areas.

The result: markedly improved service, higher operating speeds, a pickup in ridership and far fewer accidents.

Bus ridership in Singapore rose to 3.45 million a day last year, a jump of 12 per cent from 2008. Rail ridership is estimated to have risen 24 per cent to 2.22 million a day over the same period.

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#### **MEASURED APPROACH**

'Bus tendering is a major decision and will involve a fundamental change in the industry. The LTA will need to ensure that it has minimal disruption to the commuters and that the industry is ready to participate meaningfully in the change. Therefore, the LTA will take a measured approach and take time to study the issues...'

#### **A Transport Ministry spokesman**

**SUBJECT:** MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (91%); PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (90%); URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS (89%); POLITICAL PARTIES (77%); TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (76%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (71%)

**LOAD-DATE:** January 20, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** The Land Transport Authority will review bus services and get SBS Transit and SMRT Corp to raise bus capacity over the next few years to cope with fast-growing ridership. -- ST FILE PHOTO

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

99 of 190 DOCUMENTS

Channel NewsAsia

December 26, 2012 Wednesday 12:35 PM GMT

## Changes to public transport fares likely revealed in late 2013

**SECTION:** SINGAPORE NEWS

**LENGTH:** 742 words

SINGAPORE: 2013 will see more initiatives rolled out to boost the reliability of the public transport system.

With higher service levels expected, observers are hoping fares will be kept affordable. They also believe that any changes to fares will most likely be revealed late next year.

Singapore's vehicle growth rate will be halved to 0.5 per cent in February. With fewer cars being deregistered, a lower supply of Certificates of Entitlement (COEs) is expected.

COE prices for cars have already reached record high; small cars closed at S\$81,889 in the last bidding exercise of 2012.

"Next year, the package of COEs will be even less than this year, so definitely you will see the COE trend moving up," said Raymond Tang, honorary secretary of the Singapore Vehicle Traders Association.

Observers say a greater push is needed to make the public transport system a reliable alternative.

"We have to have a top-rate public transport service... otherwise how do we convince motorists to take public transport?" said Cedric Foo, chairman of the Government Parliamentary Committee (GPC) for Transport.

The Committee of Inquiry (COI) which looked into the December 2011 train breakdowns has spurred operators to boost the reliability of Singapore's rail network.

SMRT, for example, has given more attention to maintaining and renewing assets.

However disruptions on the new Circle and North-East Lines have continued to rattle public confidence.

"I think SBS Transit (could) take a leaf from the COI report as well, and see what they can learn and what they can prevent," added Mr Foo.

Bus services should also become more reliable with better frequencies.

In a rare move, the government set aside S\$1.1 billion to purchase 550 buses over five years to enhance bus services in Singapore.

"Other than bus lanes, other than providing more frequent bus services, are we able to find more impactful ways to have a revolutionary improvement or revolutionary change to bus services? I think this is something that I personally would like to see," said **Lee Der-Hong**, associate professor of civil engineering at the National University of Singapore.

Recruitment of bus drivers, particularly Singaporean drivers, is proving to be a challenge.

Changes to public transport fares likely revealed in late 2013 Channel NewsAsia December 26, 2012  
Wednesday 12:35 PM GMT

"The challenge is not just the buses; you have to hire the bus drivers, you have to train them and get them into the groove of performing those services," said Mr Foo.

Salaries of bus driver were raised this year. Differences in pay among drivers however sparked an illegal strike by SMRT drivers from China in November.

Observers have said that working conditions need to be improved to attract more Singaporeans, particularly younger ones, to the job.

News that fares may go up to help raise drivers' salaries has generated much public debate.

However Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew said the fare increases are meant to improve service standards while keeping operations commercially viable.

Observers say service levels and public sentiments should be factored into the new fare formula.

"If we were enjoying good services (today), I think passengers won't mind paying a little bit more. In the area of buses, yes we have more buses, but the irregularity is still there and the waiting time is still there. If we consider the overall economic situation and the sentiments from the public, if we do put those as major considerations the likelihood to have a fair increase is very slim," added Associate Professor Lee.

Profits made by operators must also be considered.

"What is a reasonable rate of return to them? Personally for me, the rate of return is quite good, so I hope the fare review committee will look into that," said Mr Foo.

Observers have also noted that subsidies should be given to the needy should fares increase.

"I hope that the fare review committee will also look into the needs of this group. Rather than ad hoc transport vouchers, we can build a mechanism where people in the lower income group would automatically be given certain transport subsidies," said Mr Foo.

There were no fare increases in 2012 while the fare review committee worked on a new formula and recommendations, which will be unveiled in early 2013. Parliament will then debate the issue.

Public transport operators typically submit applications for fare adjustments to the Public Transport Council in the middle of the year.

Going by past practices, it is understood that any fare changes will most likely be made known by September or later next year.

**SUBJECT:** PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (90%); MOTORCOACHES & BUSES (89%); URBAN BUS SYSTEMS (89%); WAGES & SALARIES (83%); TRENDS (78%); TRANSPORTATION SECTOR PERFORMANCE (78%); RAIL TRANSPORTATION (78%); PRICE INCREASES (75%); CIVIL ENGINEERING (73%); MOTOR VEHICLES (72%); INVESTIGATIONS (66%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (60%); STRIKES (60%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (97%); CHINA (79%)

**LOAD-DATE:** December 26, 2012

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

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Wednesday 12:35 PM GMT

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The Straits Times (Singapore)

December 4, 2009 Friday

## How Singapore can cut 12 million tons

**BYLINE:** Victoria Vaughan

**LENGTH:** 694 words

TWELVE million tons of carbon would be equivalent to the total amount released in taking a return plane trip to the moon 6,000 times, and also the entire yearly volume of emissions from Kenya, a country with 40 million people.

That is how much Singapore would have to reduce carbon emissions by if it follows through on a proposal to cut emissions by 16 per cent below 'business as usual' levels by 2020. If no changes were made, carbon emissions are predicted to reach some 72 million tons.

The Government said on Wednesday that the proposal would mean greener transport, households, industry and buildings through a combination of regulation and fiscal measures.

The target will be set if there is a legally binding global deal obliging all countries to cut emissions, and if other countries make significant pledges as an outcome of the climate change meeting in Copenhagen next week.

The Straits Times hypothesised what each sector would need to cut based on its current share of emissions, and asked how life could change.

**INDUSTRY:** The largest emitter of carbon dioxide, it is responsible for 22 million tons, or about 54 per cent of Singapore's emissions.

Its share would require it to make cuts of six million tons of carbon emissions.

Mr Edwin Khew, a former Nominated MP and chief executive of waste recycling firm IUT Global, said industry would play its part.

'Our best bet is on energy efficiency and more efficient buildings to reduce industry's carbon footprint,' he said.

He added that carbon trading credits or a carbon tax could be used to curb emissions.

**TRANSPORT:** The second biggest contributor, emitting eight million tons or 19 per cent of carbon emissions. It would have to make cuts of two million tons to help reach the target.

There are about 920,000 vehicles on Singapore's roads, which would mean an average cut of 2.48 tons per vehicle each year.

That means travelling nearly 10,000km less, or just under the distance between Singapore and Paris.

This would be tough to do, said transport expert **Lee Der Horng** from the National University of Singapore. 'Other sectors would have to do more in order to meet the target and to cut down on carbon emissions,' he

argued.

However, it would help to have electric cars on the road as well as more use of compressed natural gas in buses instead of diesel.

According to the Energy Market Authority, Singapore could reduce up to 4 per cent of its land transport emissions by 2020 if just 2 per cent of the vehicles here were electric-powered. That would mean 16,000 full-electric cars here.

**BUILDINGS:** Buildings are the third largest emitter, producing six million tons or 16 per cent of carbon, mainly through the use of electricity to power lighting and air-conditioning. They would have to cut two million tons.

Just 5 per cent of Singapore's buildings are green, according to the Building and Construction Authority. Its Green Mark scheme targets 80 per cent of existing buildings to be up to standards by 2030.

Only 55 out of 337 certified Green Mark buildings now are at GoldPlus or Platinum standard - the level which Minister for National Development Mah Bow Tan said buildings needed to be if they wanted to hit the emissions reduction target.

As a minimum, GoldPlus buildings must demonstrate energy savings of 25 per cent and Platinum buildings 30 per cent.

**HOUSEHOLDS:** Bringing up the rear in terms of carbon emissions, they contribute 3.6 million tons or 9 per cent of the total.

They would have to cut one million tons.

Mr Ravinder Singh, head of 3T Hypermizer, which promotes energy solutions and efficiency, said that town councils could save energy in the communal lighting of corridors and parks.

But there would be sacrifices made for each household too.

'Air-conditioning, fridges and washing machines all contribute to carbon emissions,' he said.

Listing some ways cuts could be made, he noted: 'People would need to not use the water heater in this tropical country or sleep with the air-con on at night and limit it to three hours a day, but people have got to be willing to take those steps.'

Source: International Energy Agency, Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources. From 2005 figures.

**SUBJECT:** EMISSIONS (94%); ELECTRIC VEHICLES (85%); EMISSIONS CREDITS (78%); ENERGY EFFICIENCY & CONSERVATION (77%); VEHICLE TRAFFIC (75%); ENERGY DEPARTMENTS (74%); COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS (72%); NATURAL GAS PRODUCTS (69%); ENERGY & UTILITY TRADE (69%); NATURAL GAS MARKETS (69%); ELECTRICITY MARKETS (69%); ALTERNATIVE FUEL VEHICLES (69%); AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY (67%); MOTOR VEHICLES (67%); AUTOMOTIVE FUELS (64%)

**GEOGRAPHIC:** SINGAPORE (95%); KENYA (90%)

**LOAD-DATE:** December 3, 2009

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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