



## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT 2013 Transportation Plan Update**

by

**The Hon. Shawn Crockwell, JP, MP**  
**Minister of Tourism Development & Transport**  
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**Mr. Speaker,** I wish to provide an update on transportation services initiated this season by my Ministry. In February of this year, we developed a Transportation Plan that was designed to significantly improve both the quality and reliability of transportation services for our residents and visitors. The Plan involved extensive input from all transportation providers in Bermuda, including Taxi and Minibus operators, the Department of Public Transportation and the Department of Marine & Ports, specifically the Ferry Service. The Plan also included input from non-transport providers, including the Transport Control Department, the Ministry of Public Works, the West End Development Corporation, the Corporation of St. George's and the major cruise lines sailing to Bermuda on a weekly basis. The introduction of the 4,000+ passenger capacity Norwegian Breakaway required us to 'up our game' in ensuring that sufficient transportation services are provided.

**Mr. Speaker,** the Transportation Plan included a number of elements, including:

- Enhanced Bus and Ferry service reliability;
- Better integrated Taxi and Minibus service, in particular at Royal Naval Dockyard;

- Better coordination and organization of transportation, specifically at the Ground Transportation Area at Dockyard and at St. George's; and
- Improved communications to our visitors.

I would like to touch briefly on each of these points, starting with the Bus and Ferry service.

The Department of Public Transportation (DPT) is charged with providing regularly scheduled bus service for residents and visitors, including school bus service, sightseeing service and shuttle bus service from Dockyard to Horseshoe Bay Beach. In past years, DPT has had a number of challenges, including an ageing bus fleet and reductions in budget allocation, which contributed to mechanical and preventive maintenance issues, resulting in a high number of out of service buses. For 2013, the high demands placed on DPT remained the same as in previous years, except we made the decision when we prepared our 2013 Transportation Plan to focus on preventive maintenance to reduce the number of out of service buses; thus improving the reliability of service. We accomplished this by employing a small contingent of retired employees in the Maintenance Section to enhance the availability of buses and to lend support to the full-time employees in the section. The impact of this decision has been significant and we have received a low level of complaints from our customers, and significantly improved the reliability of the bus service. With the arrival of our new buses, scheduled for November, we should be able to continue to improve the reliability of service moving forward.

Human resource investment is also important and we are proud of the achievement of Mr. Jorde Smith, who concluded his apprenticeship training in Automotive

Technology, with honours of distinction, at City College Brighton and Hove in Brighton, UK. Having well-trained and dedicated employees in the Mechanic Section is important in ensuring that our buses remain well maintained in the future.

**Mr. Speaker,** the Ferry Service also plays a major role in the delivery of quality public transport service to our residents and visitors. For 2013, the Ferry Service focused on ensuring that sufficient ferry service was provided and maintenance practices improved. Similar to the DPT Bus Service, during the past few years the Ferry Service also faced a number of challenges, including an ageing ferry fleet and reductions in annual budget allocations, which contributed to mechanical problems and out of service vessels. The last high-speed ferry was delivered in 2006.

In the development of our 2013 Transportation Plan, we made two important decisions designed to improve the reliability of the ferry service. The first decision was to lease the vessel 'Millennium' to provide increased capacity from Dockyard to St. George's during the peak Cruise Ship Season. The second decision was to modify the Ferry Schedule so that fewer vessels were scheduled to operate during peak travel times. This enabled us to provide backup vessels to supplement the regularly scheduled vessels when overloads occurred which was a frequent occurrence in prior years. Leasing the "Millennium" and modifying the scheduled service also enabled us to reduce the number of service hours and stress placed on the existing fleet, which resulted in improved maintenance; and consequently improved reliability of the service. Similar to the operation of DPT bus service, we have received relatively few complaints this season on the operation of our ferry service.

**Mr. Speaker,** since her commencement into service in May through the first week of September, some 94,758 passengers had been carried between Dockyard and St. Georges aboard the 'Millennium'. A total of 554 one way trips have so far been completed Monday through Friday, with no missed trips to date other than those cancelled due to Tropical Storm Gabrielle on September 10th and 11th. In total, approximately 1,200 passengers per day are being carried between Dockyard and St. George's. The vessel lease included two owner-supplied U.S. crew and four locally sourced Bermudian crew, which has been a key component in the success of this service. As was outlined to this Honourable House at the beginning of the season, the 'Millennium' will return to the United States in October. Planning for the 2014 Cruise Ship Season is already underway and 'Millennium' will return for next year's season. This action will ensure that we have sufficient capacity to potentially expand ferry services and retain the flexible ferry schedule we implemented this year.

**Mr. Speaker,** a major part of our 2013 Transportation Plan included ensuring that private transportation services be included, and that Taxi and Minibus services receive their fair share of the transportation pie. Early in the year we met with the Minibus Association, the Taxi Dispatching companies and many private Taxi and Minibus operators and owners and sought their input into improving transportation for our visitors. What resulted was improved management of transportation dispatching at Dockyard and Horseshoe Bay and better defined areas at the Ground Transportation Area for the Taxi and Minibus services to operate. We still have some more work ahead of us to ensure that the private sector continues to grow into an important part of our annual Transportation Plans.

**Mr. Speaker,** one of the more important elements of our 2013 Transportation Plan involved improved coordination and organization of transportation, in particular at the Ground Transportation Area at Dockyard and at St. George's. The first decision the Ministry made was to dramatically improve the number of staff on-site to oversee their respective areas, whether they be Bus, Ferry, Taxi or Minibus. This included the placement of three Transportation Coordinators to Dockyard during peak times to oversee the transportation operation in the Ground Transportation Area, including close coordination with the DPT, the Ferry Service Supervisors and the Transport Control Department Traffic Supervisors.

The second decision that was made was to improve the layout of the Ground Transportation Area at Dockyard. Working with the West End Development Corporation and the Ministry of Public Works, the Ground Transportation Area was re-designed into specific Zones for each category of transportation, including pre-arranged Taxis, Taxis for Hire, Taxi Island Tours, Minibuses for Hire, Minibus Beach Shuttles, Minibus Island Tours and Sightseeing and Beach Shuttle buses. In addition, a staging area was provided at the entrance to Dockyard to handle overflow Taxis and Minibuses. Combined with enhanced on-site supervision and coordination, transportation has flowed smoothly in the Ground Transportation Area even though there are frequently over 7,000 cruise ship visitors arriving at Dockyard on the same day. In cooperation with the Corporation of St. George's, we moved the Ferry Stop to Penno's Wharf where proper shelter, toilet facilities and seating are provided. We also assigned a Marine & Ports employee to supervise the daily ferry operations in St. George's.

**Mr. Speaker,** the final element of our 2013 Transportation Plan was to improve communications for our visitors. This included the before mentioned

reorganization of the Ground Transportation Area, to create clearly marked Zones for each category of transportation. It also included distribution of a Transportation Zone map on board cruise ships, new way finding signs throughout the area and the placement of a Transportation video on board the cruise ships in each cabin. This has greatly improved the level of information provided for our visitors prior to arriving in Bermuda. Special emphasis in the video was placed on Taxi and Minibus services, with less emphasis on the public bus service.

**Mr. Speaker,** I would be remiss if I didn't extend my appreciation to the dozens of personnel, working both within the Ministry and the private transportation Taxi and Minibus services, for their dedication in making the summer season a success. This includes Bus operators and Ferry crews, the DPT Supervisors at Dockyard and at the Hamilton Bus Terminal, the Marine & Ports staff at the Ferry Terminal at the Ferry Stop at Dockyard and St. George's, the Transport Control Department Traffic Officers assigned to Dockyard and Transportation Coordinators assigned to Dockyard.

Finally, I extend my appreciation to the Taxi and Minibus operator owners for working with us this season to ensure quality service is provided to our guests and residents. The extensive amount of teamwork exhibited this season is a major reason for our success.

**THANK YOU**