



PRESS RELEASE

Positive Outcomes for an Improved Public Transportation System

Belmopan, October 24th, 2023

The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Transport recognizes that Belize's public transportation system is built on a public-private partnership that includes bus owners, operators, financing institutions and the Government of Belize. To this end, on October 23, Hon. Rodwell Ferguson, Minister of Youth, Sports, and Transport, met with representatives of the Belize Bus Owners Cooperative (BBOC), Westline, James Bus Company and the Belmopan Busito Association.

At the meeting, all parties agreed that upgrading bus standards is necessary for modernizing the transport industry. The ministry clarified that by the end of December 2023, all public transport bus operators are to upgrade at least 50% of their fleets. By the end of December 2024, they will have met the target of 100%. The bus operators acknowledged the need to improve the safety and quality of service provided to Belizean commuters and are already engaged in upgrading their bus fleets to meet the new bus standards. Of particular interest was the need to retrofit public transport buses with bucket seats to ensure a more comfortable commuting experience on the main highways. Additionally, express buses are required to have air conditioning. This is in addition to meeting all safety requirements in the bus engine and infrastructure as per the checklist of bus standards.

For bus operators that meet the required standards and remain in good standing with their Road Service Permits (RSP) terms and conditions, the ministry may support their applications for financing from their preferred banking institutions. During the transition period, the ministry will consider options for further support, including consideration for having different grades or classes of buses, such as premier and economy grades.

Furthermore, the ministry will analyze other options tabled to address cost-recovery issues.

The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Transport will engage in continued dialogue with all operators to ensure that Belizeans can benefit from a safer and more efficient public transportation system by working together.

Ends