

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Re-launch of CityLiner Premium Bus Service/Park and Ride in Colombo**

In an effort to improve quality of life in the City of Colombo, the Ministry of Transport has proposed a three year program to reduce the number of private vehicles entering and operating within the city from 200,000 to 150,000 and thereby to reduce traffic congestion, consumption of fuel and environmental pollution. With a view to achieve this objective NTC will re-launch Cityliner project on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009.

The National Transport Commission (NTC) together with the Ministry of Transport has embarked on several projects to achieve these goals. One of which is the Cityliner Premium Bus Service and Park and Ride Concept that was launched in mid March this year.

This project has received good response from the public as well as the media who appreciate this project initiated by the Ministry of Transport to provide some relief to vehicle users for the first time. However, the present service provider has not been able to attract adequate passengers due to a number of marketing and operational issues. It has therefore become necessary for the NTC to re-launch this project to ensure that it keeps to its original objective of providing a high quality option for daily commuters who presently travel by personal car or motor cycle.

The new proposal is based on a new plan whereby corporate partners support this as a CSR activity by ensuring at least 2 persons to use Cityliner leaving behind their private vehicles. A number of companies have come forward to partner with the National Transport Commission to make this endeavour a success.

Initially, NTC will bear the cost of providing the buses and embark on a campaign to popularize the service with the help of business partners who will support the project as a corporate social responsibility. The partners will have the following benefits.

- Branding of the coaches outside and inside
- Inclusion as CSR partner with the National Transport Commission
- Inclusion of Designated Stop for Shoppers, say 5 trips per week day/10 on Saturdays
- Inclusion of CSR partner per Stop at designated establishment
- Discounted bus fares on the Cityliner

The marketing plan for a typical Moratuwa-Fort trip would be priced as follows;

Daily unlimited use	Rs 200
Weekly unlimited (Mon to Sat)	Rs 800
Weekly One way (Mon to Sat)	Rs 400
Monthly unlimited	Rs 3200
Monthly one way only	Rs 1600

The comparison for regular bus fare for a month is Rs 520, regular A/C bus is Rs 1040, while fuel cost alone riding a motor cycle alone is Rs 2400, while fuel cost for a small car is Rs 9600. Thus it is strategically priced to attract private vehicle users and not present public transport users.

Under this scheme, corporate partners would be offered branding on a bus both external and internal for a period of one year. In addition their contributions towards this project in terms of corporate social responsibility in promoting an environmentally and socially beneficial service would be recognized by the NTC and such recognition would be used in their publicity material and also on board the buses. Moreover, buses would be routed to arrive at the door of corporate partners offices, whereas in the case of other offices, they would drop/pick up passengers at a point closest to them on the main route.

The service would operate from Moratuwa from 700 AM to 800AM at 15 minute intervals. The return trips would leave Fort from 430PM at 20 minute intervals with the last bus at 550PM.

Each bus would travel along Galle Road. Passengers may;

- Board the bus from pre-arranged locations on Galle Road closest to their homes
- Or park their vehicles at the secured facility at Angulana
- Or have themselves dropped off at the Park and Ride facility or on Galle Road.

Passengers can make reservation over the phone and bus crews will be advised where passengers have to be picked up along a route. Moreover, passengers will have flexibility in choosing any bus in the morning and any bus in the afternoon that matches their general schedule. They will also be offered changes to any of the other buses depending on availability of seats. All efforts will be made to ensure arrangements for adequate flexibility for passenger time variations. With more demand and with more sponsors it is expected to increase the period as well as reduce the time between buses to 10 minutes.

After the initial off- trip in the morning, buses will return to Moratuwa to begin its off-peak run which will operate every 30 minutes. These trips will be routed to touch around 5 vendor sponsors who have their business establishments along the Galle Road Corridor. Buses will make stops at these en route. A passenger who buys a return ticket will be able to use it throughout the day to travel from one vendor's establishment to another before returning home. The buses will operate this service on Saturdays.

The NTC will engage a Manager for this operation who will be responsible for promotional activities, securing sponsors and partners, receiving inquiries from passengers, arranging the seating, dispatching buses as per schedule, attending to any emergency situation, passenger liaison for and on behalf of the NTC. They will operate the telephone line and make all necessary arrangements for pick ups and other passenger requirements.

It is expected that once the Galle Road corridor has been developed, other corridors would also be developed one at a time.

Buses will be hired from an operator who will provide under contract a bus that meets specifications along with driver and assistant. Bus operators have to operate a designated schedule for each day. They will be paid on a flat rate per month which would approximately include two trips per day (80 kms per day or 3000 km per month). There would be a pre-arranged per km cost for additional kms operated.