



THE MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT

POLICY/ DISCUSSION PAPER ON:

**THE INTRODUCTION OF A CHECKERED
BAND MAXI TAXI SYSTEM FOR THE
SERVICING OF SUBURBAN AND RURAL
COMMUNITIES ACROSS TRINIDAD AND
TOBAGO**

DRAFT

Date:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Ministry of Works and Transport (MOWT) bears the responsibility for the continued development and expansion of the public transportation sector of Trinidad and Tobago, which consists of an extensive network of various modes of public transport namely public service vehicles, taxis, maxi-taxis and omnibuses. The MOWT in alignment with Vision 2030¹ seeks to improve and deliver quality infrastructure and transportation systems to increase national efficiency, sustainability, as well as improve the daily lives of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. This is to be achieved by developing and providing a safe, reliable, effective, environmentally-friendly, efficient and fully integrated transport system together with modern infrastructure and sustainable travel options which will best meet the citizens' needs of travel and transport.
2. Inadequate and inefficient suburban and rural transport is a major factor contributing to the increasingly high number of vehicles comprising the country's vehicle fleet and the economic underdevelopment of towns, villages and rural communities. The World Bank² estimates that as at 2019, the rural population of Trinidad and Tobago is approximately 47%. It is in this context together with the lack of an established and effective sub-urban and rural transportation system, commuters are faced with daily challenges in their commute both at peak times a.m. and p.m. to secure transport without multiple changes of modes of public transportation services. Such changes in modes of public transportation result in extra costs paid by the commuter, which negatively impacts low and middle income households; and of course members of such households make up the bulk of the travelling public. Despite the provision of public transport by the Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC) from main city and town centres to rural communities, delays in arrival and/or departure times and lengthy journey times with numerous stops suggest that buses can be considered an unattractive alternative mode of transportation to the use of personal motor vehicles.

¹ Vision 2030 - The National Development Strategy of Trinidad and Tobago >

<https://www.planning.gov.tt/sites/default/files/Vision%202030-%20The%20National%20Development%20Strategy%20of%20Trinidad%20and%20Tobago%202016-2030.pdf> <

²This approximated percentage is calculated as the difference between the total population and the urban population > <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?end=2019&locations=TT&start=1960&view=chart> <

3. Towards this end, the MOWT strongly believes that it has become necessary to implement an efficient, environmentally-friendly, reliable and safe sub-urban and rural transportation service by way of the rural route ‘checkered band’ maxi taxi system. The MOWT seeks to collaborate with the maxi-taxi industry to achieve this objective, with a phased but ambitious approach which will ultimately seek to provide transport services in colloquial terms, “to get inside” sub-urban and rural communities or using the land transportation sector vernacular, the ‘last mile’ of a person’s journey. With this initiative and other policy decisions, the objective is to encourage persons to abstain from the use of their personal motor vehicle and to make the switch to utilising public transport. It is anticipated that this will have a positive knock-on effect on the environment as less vehicles in operation would be likely to reduce traffic congestion and vehicle noise and emissions thus improving air quality.
4. The Ministry examined the current legal framework under the Maxi-Taxi Act, Chap. 48:53 and public transportation systems for sub-urban and rural communities of other Commonwealth jurisdictions to ascertain the key features which are necessary for the introduction and regulation of this new system. These jurisdictions included Canada³, South Africa⁴, Jamaica⁵, Barbados⁶, the Bahamas⁷, Cayman Islands⁸, and Guyana⁹.

³ Province of Alberta, Canada, “Developing Sustainable Transit Options for Small Communities,” > <https://nadc.ca/media/1194/sustainable-transit.pdf> <

⁴ South Africa, (1) National Road Traffic Act 93, 1996 (NRTA); (2) National Land Transport Act 5, 2009 (NLTA) (3) The National Road Traffic Act Regulations; (4) National Land Transport Transition Act, 2000 (Act No. 22 of 2000): Regulations: Distinguishing marks for mini-bus and midi-bus > <https://www.gov.za/documents/national-road-traffic-act-regulations-distinguishing-marks-mini-bus-and-midi-bus> <

⁵ Jamaica – (1) The Road Traffic Act, 1938; The Transport Authority Act, 1987; (2) The Public Passenger Transport Regulations and Acts (Rural & Corporate Area) > <https://moj.gov.jm/sites/default/files/laws/Public%20Passenger%20Transport%20%28Rural%20Area%29%20Act.pdf> <

⁶ Barbados – (1) Road Traffic Act, CAP 259 > www.transportboard.com/wp-content/uploads/Road-Traffic-Act-Cap295.pdf < As amended by: Road Traffic (Amendment) Act, 2018 > http://104.238.85.55/en/ShowPdf/1984_141.pdf < (3) Road Traffic Regulations, 1984 as amended by the Road Traffic (Amendment) Regulations 2017.

⁷ Bahamas – (taxi-cabs) Road Traffic Act, Chap 220 > http://laws.bahamas.gov.bs/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/1958/1958-0057/RoadTrafficAct_1.pdf <

⁸ Cayman Islands – Road Traffic Law 2011 > <http://cnslibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/Traffic-Law-2011.pdf> <

⁹ Guyana – Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act, Chap 51:02 > <http://www.gra.gov.gy/publications/tax-laws/510-motor-vehicles-road-traffic-act-cap-51-02> <

1. INTRODUCTION

1. In keeping with Vision 2030¹⁰ for the sustainable development of Trinidad and Tobago, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is seeking to improve the public transportation sector by expanding the maxi-taxi system to provide efficient transportation services to sub-urban and rural communities. With the transportation sector largely requiring major improvements, it is the view of the MOWT that access to safe and efficient transportation in rural communities is crucial to the promotion of economic and social growth. The proposed new maxi taxi system is anticipated to have a significant positive impact on community development and sustainability, the delivery of health and education services, entrepreneurship and localised economic growth, agricultural development and the overall livelihood of residents.
2. Similar to other commonwealth Caribbean countries, Trinidad and Tobago inherited post-colonial public transportation models and road networks which were designed well over half a century ago for a national population significantly less than what exists today. Over this period, coupled with exponential population growth resulting in the most recent national population figure being approximately 1.3 Million persons¹¹, the current public transportation network developed consisting of both publicly and privately operated and maintained public service vehicles. These public service vehicles include buses under the Public Transportation Service Corporation and privately-owned maxi-taxis and taxis. The average number of persons who use public transportation on a daily and weekly basis was estimated at 728,000 persons, which is about fifty-six per cent (56%) of the Trinidad and Tobago population¹².

¹⁰ Vision 2030 - The National Development Strategy of Trinidad and Tobago, Theme 3 Improving Productivity through Quality Infrastructure and Transportation. > <https://www.planning.gov.tt/sites/default/files/Vision%202030-%20The%20National%20Development%20Strategy%20of%20Trinidad%20and%20Tobago%202016-2030.pdf> <

¹¹ (1) Central Statistical Office (CSO) ><https://cso.gov.tt/subjects/population-and-vital-statistics/population/> <
(2) According to the CSO's mid-year estimates, Trinidad and Tobago's population is expected to increase by 0.4 percent from 1,359,193 persons in 2018, to 1,363,985 persons in 2019. > <https://www.finance.gov.tt/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/REVIEW-OF-THE-ECONOMY-2019-1.pdf> <

¹² Responses of the Minister of Works and Transport to Oral Questions raised in the Senate, Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 see pages 13-14 > <http://www.ttparliament.org/hansards/hs20210316.pdf> <

3. In the wider Caribbean, the common modes of transport are minibuses, taxis and buses which is reflective of what exists in Trinidad and Tobago. The table below shows the physical and operational characteristics of public transportation modes in Caribbean countries such as Guyana, Barbados, Jamaica, St. Lucia and the main modes of transportation:

Common Terms	Local Variant	Country	Ownership	Vehicle Type	Seat Capacity	Route Options	Fares	Stops
Minibus	Maxi taxi	Trinidad and Tobago	Private	Jiangsu Joylong, Toyota HiAce, Nissan Urvan, Toyota Coaster, Mitsubishi- Rosa	15-24	Line haul	Varies by route/Fixed fare on given route	On Demand
	Mimbus	Guyana		Toyota HiAce	15		Fixed fare	
	ZR Van	Barbados		Toyota Hi-Ace	11		Fixed fare	
	minibus	Jamaica		Hino Acme	24		Varies by route/Fixed fare on given route	
	minibus	St. Lucia		Toyota HiAce,	15		Varies by route/Fixed fare on given route	
Taxis	Route Taxi PH Taxi	Trinidad and Tobago	Private	Varied	4-8	Line haul Feeder routes	Varies by route/Fixed fare on given route	On Demand
	Taxi	Guyana				Line haul	Varies by supplier	
	Hackney Taxi/ Route Taxi	Jamaica				Line haul Feeder Routes	Varies by route/Fixed fare on given route	
Bus	PTSC Bus	Trinidad and Tobago	State	-City Champion, Higer Bus, Hino Acme, Mitsubishi Rosa, Thomas Cummins Bus, Volvo Caio, Zhengzhou Yutong	24-45	Line haul	Varies by route/Fixed fare on given route	Fixed
	Transport Board Bus	Barbados		Hino- Acme Mercedes- Marcopolo Mercedes- Caio	28-40		Fixed fare	
	JUTC	Jamaica		-Golden Dragon XML, Volvo VDL, Jonckheere			Varies by route/Fixed fare on given route	

Table 1: Physical and Operational Characteristics of Public Transportation Modes in the Caribbean Countries such as Guyana, Barbados, Jamaica, St. LuciaSource: L. Wright, J-M. Tangwell, and A. Dick (2021): **Public Transportation in the Caribbean: Dominance of Paratransit Modes**¹³

4. The early developments of the maxi-taxi industry and its “fixed routes for fixed fares” system reflected an international trend during the late 1970s and 1980s for public transportation to veer away from large transit units such as trains and large buses. The trend sought to place

¹³ L. Wright, J-M. Tangwell, and A. Dick (2021): “Public Transportation in the Caribbean: Dominance of Paratransit Modes”, The West Indian Journal of Engineering Vol.43, No.2, January/February 2021, pp.31-41 > [\(PDF\) Public Transportation in the Caribbean: Dominance of Paratransit Modes \(researchgate.net\)](#)<

reliance on smaller vehicles operating within small scaled systems with consideration given to the population size and social needs. Further, the smaller system required less infrastructure and the smaller vehicles provided more flexibility in operation (street capacity) and the maintenance costs were significantly less compared to use of buses or trains¹⁴. It must be noted that the National Transportation Plan (1967) in its recommendations, also placed strong focus on the development and improvement of the bus service primarily in urban areas of Trinidad and Tobago and it expressly stated that:

“The replacement of route taxi service in rural areas and on low volume roads is of secondary importance. Indeed, the route taxis are an economical form of public transportation on these routes. Accordingly, the improvements to the bus service should mainly be concentrated along the high revenue routes in the urban areas.”¹⁵ [emphasis added]

5. In a 2019 report by the Joint Select Committee on Land and Physical Infrastructure¹⁶, it was stated that Trinidad and Tobago’s road transportation system is currently in crisis as it has not been governed by a proper National Transportation Plan for twenty-eight (28) years. As regards to the operation of taxis and maxi-taxis transport vehicles in Trinidad and Tobago in 2021¹⁷, there are 6,739 registered maxi-taxis in operation. Of the commuting public served by maxi-taxis, 17 per cent are for work and 18 per cent are for schools. There are 32,666 registered “H” taxis in operation consisting of 6,739 maxi-taxis and 25,927 conventional taxis. Recent statistics have shown that approximately 56 per cent of the commuting public use public transportation which consists of “H” taxis, maxi-taxis and buses.

¹⁴ For example, Kenya initiated the *matatu*; the Philippines and Istanbul the *jeepnee*; Hong Kong, Cairo and Kuala Lumpur the *minibus*; Khartoum the *bakassi* (a converted truck); South Africa the *kombi* and Puerto Rico the *publico*. - Good Policies and Practices on Rural Transport in Africa - Planning Infrastructure & Services

><https://www.ssatp.org/sites/ssatp/files/publications/SSATPWP100-Rural-Transport-Planning.pdf> <

¹⁵ National Transportation Policy (1967)

¹⁶ An inquiry into the Effectiveness of Measures in Place to Reduce Traffic Congestion on the Nation’s Roads - Eighth Report of Fifth Session 2019/2020, Eleventh Parliament [2019] > <http://www.ttparliament.org/reports/p11-s5-J-20191206-LPI-R8.pdf> <

¹⁷ Responses of the Minister of Works and Transport to Oral Questions raised in the Senate, Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 see pages 13-14 > <http://www.ttparliament.org/hansards/hs20210316.pdf> <

6. The Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC) is governed by the Public Transport Service Act, Chap. 48:02¹⁸ and the Corporation executes its mandate for the provision of bus transportation under the supervision of the Ministry of Works and Transport as the line Ministry. Also, it is necessary to mention that the PTSC receives funding for its operations from the Government through the Ministry and from its various revenue streams primarily being the pre-paid ticket scheme.
7. The PTSC's vehicle fleet comprises of approximately five hundred (500) buses which provide key transportation services with high volume public access to an estimated one hundred and fifty-eight thousand, seven hundred and twenty-seven (158,727) rural commuters per month on the main roads and rural routes across Trinidad and Tobago¹⁹. However, PTSC operations on main and rural routes are inadequately servicing the feeder routes to 'the last mile'²⁰ of a commuter's journey.
8. By comparison, the maxi-taxi and taxi systems represent a significant private sector investment in public transportation. The Maxi-Taxi Regulations made in accordance with the Maxi-Taxi Act, Chap. 48:53 created six (6) routes for the operation of maxi-taxis in Trinidad and Tobago - five (5) routes in Trinidad and one (1) route in Tobago. With the steady expansion of the maxi-taxi system over the years, there is an estimated total of four thousand, five hundred and twelve (4,512) maxi-taxis currently in operation across the six (6) established main routes in Trinidad and Tobago.
9. Despite the establishment of regulated modes of transportation in rural communities namely through the national bus service, maxi-taxis and taxis, the overall problems and inadequacies of public transport have created a high demand and aspiration for private motor vehicle ownership, even (or perhaps more aptly, especially) in rural communities. Based on current

¹⁸ The Public Transportation Service Act, Chap. 48:02.

>https://rgd.legalaffairs.gov.tt/laws2/Alphabetical_List/lawspdfs/48.02.pdf<

¹⁹ PTSC Rural Ridership Report details the 60 routes operated and providing bus services to rural commuters and communities.

²⁰ The 'last mile' refers to the final leg of a person's commute e.g. from the bus stop to your home – see page 52 of the Joint Select Committee on Land and Physical Infrastructure - An inquiry into the Effectiveness of Measures in Place to Reduce Traffic Congestion on the Nation's Roads - Eighth Report of Fifth Session 2019/2020, Eleventh Parliament [2019] > <http://www.ttparliament.org/reports/p11-s5-J-20191206-LPI-R8.pdf> < accessed on October 07, 2020

trade data from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, over 25,000 motor vehicles are imported annually²¹ with a value of approximately Two point Five Billion Trinidad and Tobago Dollars (TT\$2.5 Billion). It is without question that such high demand and ownership of private motor vehicles created a negative impact on the efficiency and potential for sustainable development of all modes of public transport.²² With members of the public opting to commute via private motor vehicle, this results in low ridership levels on public transport, mainly on bus services, which results in reduced financial viability and inefficiency in the operation and management of public transportation.

10. Turning to the illegal operators, some have sought to exploit the inadequacies of the transport system yet seek to provide services to the underserved routes. In recent decades, there has been significant population migration and dispersal of settlement patterns with the mushrooming and construction of housing developments by the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) and private sector developers. As such, the current routes for public transport by buses and maxi-taxis do not adequately correspond with these burgeoning community developments, which ordinarily do not have ‘last mile’ access to transportation. As a result, there is proliferation of informal and non-conventional transportation services, in most instances, illegally and competitively provided by “PH Vehicles” and “White T-vans”. These illegal vehicles and drivers operate along the current established routes and provide highly demanded transport services to underserved routes in sub-urban and rural communities where persons require a service that takes them to their final destination.

²¹ Over the years, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago implemented a Quota System for the Foreign Used Car industry and Registered Dealers. The current Quota System in effect in the Foreign Used Car industry is thirteen thousand five hundred (13,500) for Gasoline, Diesel and Hybrid Vehicles and one thousand five hundred (1,500) for CNG vehicles. It should be noted however, that the average cars that are actually imported by all Registered Dealers are significantly less than 10,000 units per annum. Source: Article titled “Budget Measures on Motor Vehicles (Used and New)” dated October 07, 2020 > <http://www.news.gov.tt/content/budget-measures-motor-vehicles-used-and-new#.X6JeCohKhPY> < accessed on November 03, 2020

²² Since the 1950s, passenger transport provision in England was significantly impacted by the growth of private motoring as car ownership reduced demand for passenger transport, which in turn reduced passenger transport provision and incentivised car ownership. In England, that downwards spiral was most apparent in rural areas, where the majority of people own a vehicle: UK House of Commons, Transport Committee, “Passenger Transport in isolated communities” Fourth Report of Session 2014–15 Report dated July 2014 ><https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmtran/288/288.pdf> <

- 11.** The Traffic Management Branch of the Ministry conducted assessments in 2018 on the operations of the PTSC, with specific emphasis in rural communities, the operations of the “informal taxi” system, commuter wait times on the most populated routes and the capacity of existing Maxi-Taxi hubs. The findings of these assessments revealed and confirmed that there is a great demand for the transportation services to sub-urban and rural communities and currently, this demand is being satisfied by the operation of illegal taxis and minibuses/ T-vans operating outside of the established maxi-taxi transit routes.
- 12.** Therefore, the Ministry seeks to implement an efficient, environmentally-friendly, reliable and safe sub-urban and rural transportation service by way of a rural route ‘checkered band’ maxi-taxi system. The successful establishment of the rural routes for the checkered band maxi-taxi system requires an examination of the following determinants:
- a) population density and demographics in communities;
 - b) ongoing or earmarked construction of housing developments by private sector developers, the Housing Development Corporation and the Land Settlement Agency;
 - c) existing road conditions in rural areas and communities;
 - d) road infrastructure such as identification of bus stop/ public service vehicle stop locations, shelter and signage; and
 - e) traffic conditions.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY/ DISCUSSION PAPER

The Objectives of this policy/ discussion paper are to:

- a) develop and provide a safe, reliable, effective, efficient and fully integrated transport infrastructure and service operation which will best meet the citizens' needs of travel and transport in sub-urban and rural communities;
- b) improve the integration of transportation services which allow for seamless and hassle-free home to destination and/or employment to destination circuits;
- c) eradicate the deficiencies in the national public transportation sector which foster the provision and consequent mushrooming of unregulated and high-risk activities attempting to service commuters;
- d) promote sustainable economic and social development of sub-urban and rural communities with creation of employment and general ease of access to basic services such as health and education which redounds to a reduction of poverty levels in rural communities;
- e) encourage the regeneration of confidence in the public transport sector to reduce the high reliance on use of private vehicles as a means of travel;
- f) set the legislative framework for the introduction of a checkered band maxi-taxi system for sub-urban and rural communities.

3. CURRENT PROBLEMS NECESSITATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW CHECKERED BAND MAXI-TAXI SYSTEM

1. Lack of Public Confidence in public transportation resulting in the prioritisation of personal vehicle transportation and proliferation of illegal PH and T-Vans operations imitating legitimate public transport

On an examination of the existing transportation facilities and services available for sub-urban and rural communities, it was observed that despite the services provided by the PTSC and the taxis, the demands for transport are being satisfied by PH taxis and T-vans ordinarily painted solid white. Analysis done by PTSC showed that in 2014, transportation services were only able to provide an average of sixty-nine per cent (69%) service on its total 154 routes. While the PTSC provides services to one hundred and fifty-eight thousand, seven hundred and twenty-seven (158,727) rural commuters per month on its 60 routes across main roads and rural routes of Trinidad and Tobago, there is a large cohort of the population which still places reliance on personal motor vehicles and in the alternative the illegal PH taxis and T-vans.

Furthermore, on or around February 2018, the Traffic Management Branch of the Ministry observed during its data collection exercises that these illegal T-vans operate for the various areas within the established routes and carry a significant volume of passengers in areas that established routes are not servicing:

Table 2: Operations of illegal T-vans in areas within established routes

Band		Route	Number of vehicles	Trips per day	Fare
1.	Yellow	Maracas/Las Cuevas/Blanchisseuse	16	4	\$20
2.	Red	Sangre Grande – Toco Matelot	15	4	\$7-\$25
		Sangre Grande – Fishing Pond	15	8	\$4-\$10
		Sangre Grande – Plum Mitan/ Biche	4	6	\$10
		Arima – Cumuto	10	6	
		Arima – Blanchisseuse	10		

Band	Route	Number of vehicles	Trips per day	Fare
	North Manzanilla – Sangre Grande	1		
	Lopinot – EMR Arouca	10	6	
	Curepe – St. Joseph Maracas Valley	10		
	Tamana – Sangre Grande	10		\$7-\$9
3.	Green	Chaguanas – Tabaquite	15	\$7-\$9
4.	Black			
5.	Brown	Erin / Palo Seco / Penal Rock Road / Cedros / Point Fortin / Barrackpore / San Fernando	40	
6.	Blue	Tobago	10	

The passenger capacity of these T-vans is between 12-15 passengers, so on average it may be estimated that this illegal operation transports approximately twelve thousand (12,000) commuters per day if the average of six (6) trips are utilised as the constant in the calculation.

2. Impact of Crime²³

Within recent years, there has been a steady increase in criminal activity against operators of public transportation vehicles and passengers²⁴. In early 2021, following the successive brutal

²³ (1) Trinidad Express Newspapers Article: “Arima woman kidnapped, father begs for proof of life” by Jensen La Vende Sunday 31 January 2021 > <https://newsday.co.tt/2021/01/31/arima-woman-kidnapped-father-begs-for-proof-of-life/><

(2)Trinidad Express Newspapers Article: “Murder of Ashanti: Driver to be charged” by [Alexander Bruzual](#) dated December 11, 2020 and Updated December 14, 2020 > https://trinidadexpress.com/news/local/murder-of-ashanti-driver-to-be-charged/article_1def9c6e-3c1e-11eb-aaaa-27f0446e4d87.htm |<

(3)Trinidad and Tobago Newsday Newspaper Article: “Ashanti Riley murder suspect faces new charges in rape, kidnapping of 15-year-old girl” by Darren Bahaw dated Sunday December 13 2020 > <https://newsday.co.tt/2020/12/13/ashanti-riley-murder-suspect-faces-new-charges-in-rape-kidnapping-of-15-year-old-girl/> <

LoopTT Article: “Suspect captured after maxi driver assaulted and robbed” by Loop News dated October 28, 2020 > <https://www.looptt.com/content/suspect-captured-after-maxi-driver-assaulted-and-robbed> < accessed on November 06, 2020

(4) Trinidad and Tobago Newsday Article: “Maxi Taxi Robbery” by Stacy Moore dated Friday January 11, 2019 > <https://newsday.co.tt/2019/01/11/maxi-taxi-robbery/> < accessed November 06, 2020

(5) Trinidad Guardian Newspaper Article: “Two held for maxi-taxi robberies” dated Sunday October 09 2011 > <https://www.guardian.co.tt/article-6.2.452414.b03b4d6f11> < accessed November 06, 2020

²⁴ (1) LoopTT Article, “UWI student reports rape by PH taxi driver” by Dareece Polo dated February 25 2020 > <https://www.looptt.com/content/uwi-student-reports-rape-ph-taxi-driver> < Accessed on November 03, 2020

murders of two young women, Ashanti Riley and Andrea Bharatt, there was significant public outcry against gender-based violence perpetrated against women. Both women were victims of heinous crimes committed by criminals under the guise of operating as a PH driver. This resulted in the clarion call during protest action for the protection of women coupled with the reform of the public transportation system to address the issue of illegal PH drivers.

The prevalence of gender-based violence is linked to entrenched patriarchal norms and values in society which are buttressed by the lack of formal sexual harassment policies and codes of conduct in public transportation systems. Accordingly, this proposed checkered band maxi-taxi system would provide persons, particularly those belonging to vulnerable groups such as women and children, with a reliable and safe alternative to the transport services illegitimately provided by PH drivers in rural communities.

3. Accessibility of transport to vulnerable groups – persons with disabilities

Vulnerable groups or isolated communities are oftentimes heavily reliant on public transportation services and are disproportionately affected by reduced or lack of access to public transportation. Vulnerable groups include the elderly, persons with disabilities, women and children for whom public transportation is often the only option. Such persons can be left isolated or dependent on friends and family to car pool in order to travel to and from rural areas. In Trinidad and Tobago, the fundamental human rights and freedoms of citizens are enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago²⁵, and these human rights include but are not limited to, “the right of the individual to equality before the law and the protection of the law” and “the right of the individual to equality of treatment from any public authority in the exercise of any functions.” Additionally, these rights and freedoms are endorsed by the

(2) Daily Express Newspaper Article, “Morvant woman tells of 'taxi' rape attack by Susan Mohammed dated July 05, 2019 and Updated Feb 21, 2020 > https://trinidadexpress.com/news/local/morvant-woman-tells-of-taxi-rape-attack/article_34768dc4-9f5a-11e9-a5e9-3303c2926147.html < accessed on November 03, 2020

(3) Trinidad and Tobago Newsday Newspapers Article, “Woman raped by PH driver and accomplice while man looks on”, by Naline Seelal dated July 11, 2018 > <https://newsday.co.tt/2018/07/11/woman-raped-by-ph-driver-and-accomplice-while-man-looks-on/> < accessed on November 03, 2020

(4) LoopTT Article, 'PH' taxi driver charged for raping teenager” Loop News dated September 04, 2017 > <https://www.looptt.com/content/ph-taxi-driver-charged-raping-teenager> < accessed on November 03, 2020

²⁵ Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Chapter 1:01 > https://rgd.legalaffairs.gov.tt/laws2/Alphabetical_List/lawspdfs/1.01.pdf <

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (United Nations, 2006).²⁶

On September 27, 2007, Trinidad and Tobago became a signatory to the UNCRPD and ratified the said UNCRPD and its Optional Protocol on June 25, 2015²⁷. The purpose of the UNCRPD is to promote, protect and enable the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity²⁸. Therefore, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is under an international obligation to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities. Consideration may be given to adoption of a similar initiative pursued in Kenya²⁹ whereby public transport minibuses called ‘matatus’, which are the equivalent to our local maxi-taxis, were designed to be wheelchair accessible by building a ramp in the back of the vehicle as well as outfitting the minivan with foldable seats. Such features in public transport vehicles would allow for accessibility to the elderly, infirm and persons with disabilities for the full and equal enjoyment of amenities with the wider community.

Additionally, this initiative would set the foundation for the concept of ‘Total Transport’ in rural areas whereby transport resources are pooled with other essential services resources to deliver a range of services to isolated groups and communities by making more efficient use of existing resources. Such an example includes the pooling of hospital/ health centre transport or schools and educational centres with public transportation services. Total Transport involves

²⁶ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), 2006 and its Optional Protocol ><http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf><

²⁷Government Website News Article: “T & T ratifies convention on rights of persons with disabilities”, created on June 28, 2015 - >www.news.gov.tt/content/tt-ratifies-convention-rights-persons-disabilities#.XC15SRYPCEc<

²⁸ UNCRPD Article 19 - Right to Live in the Community, Article 28- Right to an adequate standard of living, Article 29 - Right to Participate in Political cultural and Public Life

²⁹ In 2018, UN-Habitat, in partnership with the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and the Institute of Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), initiated a project in Kenya called Access and Mobility: The implications of Universal Access on Groups in Vulnerable Situations in Nairobi. This arrangement allows the matatu to accommodate a wheelchair user, while also being able to return the seats to their original position when the space is not needed for a person living with a disability. (UN Habitat Worldwide, 2018) page 18 of the UN Habitat Gender Sensitive Mini-Bus Services & Transport Infrastructure for African Cities: A Practical Toolkit (2019) ><https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/download-manager-files/Gender%20Toolkit.pdf> <

integrating transport services that are currently commissioned by different central and local government agencies and provided by different transportation operators. This allows existing resources to be allocated and co-ordinated more efficiently, resulting in value for money and the provision of services to vulnerable groups in rural communities that are more effective at meeting their needs.

4. Lack of Infrastructure and poor Road Conditions in sub-urban and rural communities - Support and Involvement of the Regional Corporations

Due to poor road conditions, congestion and high traffic volumes in relation to road capacity, the existing road network offers low levels of connectivity for rural areas in certain parts of the country. In its 2019 Report, the Joint Select Committee on Land and Physical Infrastructure acknowledged the MOWT's submission that poorly maintained road infrastructure is prevalent in rural areas, particularly "the occurrence of significant road defects such as rutting and potholing along the road network and the negative impact it has on ride quality, efficiency and commuting time"³⁰. Therefore, this initiative requires the collaboration and support of the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government and the various Municipal Corporations for the sustainability of the operations of the checkered band maxi-taxis on secondary roads and streets which fall under the jurisdiction of the respective Municipal Corporations.

³⁰ Page 96: The Joint Select Committee on Land and Physical Infrastructure - An inquiry into the Effectiveness of Measures in Place to Reduce Traffic Congestion on the Nation's Roads - Eighth Report of Fifth Session 2019/2020, Eleventh Parliament [2019] > <http://www.tparliament.org/reports/p11-s5-J-20191206-LPI-R8.pdf> < accessed on October 07, 2020

4. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MAXI-TAXI ACT, Chap. 48:53

Generally, the provisions of the primary legislation, the Maxi-Taxi Act, lay the foundation for the expansion of the maxi-taxi system to include rural routes inadequately serviced by the current public transportation system.

Based on the recommendations advanced for the expansion of the Maxi-Taxi System and the operationalisation of the checkered-band maxi-taxi system, it is proposed that amendments be made to the **Maxi-Taxi Regulations** in accordance with **section 13 of the Maxi-Taxi Act** and promulgated by affirmative resolution of Parliament.

The amendment of the Regulations will seek to upgrade the current system by introducing new routes to sub-urban and rural areas and maxi-taxis bearing checkered bands in colours corresponding to the main routes which would be authorised to ply the new routes. Specific amendments would include:

- a) Amendment to Regulation 2 – inclusion of a definition of rural route. Amendment to the Fourth Schedule (routes) to include the rural sub-routes.
- b) Amendment to Regulation 3 to include subregulations 3(1) and 3(2) for sub-route areas. For the rationalisation of a breakdown of routes a comparative analysis may be required between the PTSC’s rural services ridership report and the TMB’s data from its assessments on the operations of PH and T-vans.
- c) Amendment to Regulation 4 to include technical details on the dimensions of the checkered band – width and spacing of bands and checkered pattern³¹. This is necessary to create

³¹ See Appendix I as the proposed specimen for Trinidad and Tobago
Reference is made to South Africa’s Regulations on this area: Government Notice No. R. 890 dated September 04, 2006 National Land Transport Transition Act, 2000 (Act No. 22 of 2000): Regulations: Distinguishing marks for mini-bus and midi-bus > <https://www.gov.za/documents/national-road-traffic-act-regulations-distinguishing-marks-mini-bus-and-midi-bus> <
General Notice 946 of 2014 National Land Transport Act, 2009 (Act No. 5 Of 2009) Draft Regulations on Distinguishing Marks for Minibuses and Midi-buses used for Minibus Taxi-Type Services > https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201411/38150gen946.pdf <

the clear distinction between main route maxi taxis under the six established routes with solid bands painted on the vehicle and those for the sub-urban and rural routes with coloured checkered bands demonstrating that they are rural route maxi-taxis.

- d) Vehicle requirements – vehicle type to be approved by Licensing Authority via notification published in the Trinidad and Tobago Gazette.
- e) Harmonisation of the terminology to convey that all maxi taxis are subject to the requirements under the Act for registration and operation.
- f) An increase in the fines applicable for breaches of the Maxi-Taxi Regulations. The **Maxi-Taxi Regulations** prescribes the current fines, on summary conviction on a tiered basis. In respect of **regulations 7, 9 and 10**, the fine is Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) for the first offence and for any subsequent offence, the fine varies from Twenty-Five Dollars (\$25.00) to Fifty Dollars (\$50.00) for each day during which the offence continues after conviction. It is to be noted that Regulation 19 provides that the fine on summary conviction can be Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) together with the penalty of the cancellation of the Permit by the Administering Authority. **Regulation 19** states:

“19. A person who contravenes any of these Regulations commits an offence and is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine of —
(a) five hundred dollars for the first offence; or
(b) five hundred dollars and the cancellation.”

The fines may be too low to serve as an effective deterrent. It is therefore proposed that the fines be increased to Three Thousand Dollars (\$3000.00) for the first offence and for any subsequent offence, Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) for each day during which the offence continues after conviction.

5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS TOWARDS THE OPERATIONALISATION OF THE CHECKERED BAND MAXI-TAXI SYSTEM

On February 6th, 2020, Cabinet agreed to the implementation of a Rural Checkered Band System for maxi-taxi operators to assist in servicing the under-serviced routes in Trinidad and Tobago. The following are key considerations towards operationalisation of the checkered band maxi-taxi system:

1. Budgetary Considerations

The budget for the successful implementation of the checkered band system would require that the Ministry determine the Targets/ Target Groups and conduct a Cost Benefit Analysis in order to make feasible determinations on route locations, distances to be covered on journeys, operations of terminals/laybys as catchment areas and the fares for such services.

For the establishment of a sub-urban and rural transportation system target groups are determined mainly by the demographics of the various communities such as:

- i) Women and young children
- ii) Students who attend universities and schools outside the community
- iii) The elderly or senior citizens
- iv) Persons employed in urban areas and the community
- v) Persons employed in the agricultural sector
- vi) Persons with disabilities

With respect to conducting a Cost Benefit Analysis, the key economic components for consideration include³²:

³² John Hine (September 2014) African Transport Policy Program Working Paper No.100“Good Policies and Practices on Rural Transport in Africa - Planning Infrastructure & Services”><https://www.ssatp.org/sites/ssatp/files/publications/SSATPWP100-Rural-Transport-Planning.pdf> <

- i) First round effects and secondary benefits
- ii) Project and alternative case
- iii) Planning time horizon, discounting and residual values
- iv) Use of economic prices and inflation
- v) Road investment and maintenance costs
- vi) Estimating traffic benefits (normal, diverted and generated traffic)
- vii) Forecasting traffic
- viii) Estimating generated traffic
- ix) Vehicle operating costs
- x) Value of passenger time
- xi) Accident rates and costs
- xii) Economic decision criteria
- xiii) Strengths and weaknesses of transport – Cost-benefit analysis

As a result of this approval, the Ministry proposes to implement the system in a phased basis for the following reasons:

- ✓ to test the attractiveness of the system;
- ✓ closely monitor and evaluate the viability of transportation services on one route before expanding to others. This is to assure that most of the kinks are fixed before full roll out of the system;
- ✓ the Ministry will have to use resources to make Bus Stop signs, Bus Sheds, pavement markings and other infrastructural upgrades for the success of the system;
- ✓ to change the laws to accommodate the system, such as creation of stands etc;
- ✓ test the interaction/ relationship between routes which may overlap. For example, there will be times where the checkered band maxi-taxi System may cross a Solid Band System.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that a Pilot Programme be commissioned for the checkered band system. This would allow for monitoring and evaluating of such a system.

- It is proposed that the Pilot Programme operate for an initial period of six (6) months. This period is deemed sufficient in order to monitor and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the Pilot Programme and the system.
- An evaluation of this six (6) month period will be conducted before considering the expansion of the system. This evaluation will take the form of commuter wait-time surveys and questionnaires for both the operators and the traveling public.
- The expansion of the Checkered Band Maxi-Taxi System would therefore mean that locations which were considered as “difficult to access by public transportation” would be a thing of the past. It is proposed that the Checkered Band System be expanded to include the following areas with maxi-taxis bearing the corresponding colour-coded checkered band:
 - Caura to Tunapuna Priority Mall on the Bus Route (Red)
 - Lopinot to the Eastern Main Road (Red)
 - Caura to Eastern Main Road (Red)
 - Toco to Sangre Grande (Red)
 - Chaguanas to Tabaquite (Green)

2. Vehicle Type and Requirements as a public service vehicle

Under section 5 of the Maxi Taxi Act, the Licensing Authority determines the suitability of vehicles for use as a maxi-taxi taking into account the following factors:

- (a) its safety as a public service vehicle;
- (b) the convenience and comfort of the passengers;
- (c) the availability of the vehicle as well as its spare parts in Trinidad and Tobago;
- (d) the facilities available for assembling the vehicle locally; and
- (e) such specifications of the vehicle as may be prescribed.

There must be a determination as to whether the proposed checkered band maxi-taxi system will facilitate the use of small and/or large maxi-taxis on routes. Factors such as road capacity,

vehicle type density in operation on routes and the demand for high passenger transit would be critical considerations. The following vehicle models are commonplace in the industry:

1. Toyota Coaster (large maxi-taxi)
2. Toyota Hiace (small maxi-taxi)
3. Nissan Civilian (large maxi-taxi)
4. Nissan Urvan (small maxi-taxi)
5. Mitsubishi Rosa (large maxi-taxi)
6. Mazda (Large)
7. Isuzu (Large)

Given that these vehicles will be operating on sub-urban and rural roads, the main components of vehicle operating costs are expected to be as follows:

- i) Capital costs including depreciation and interest
- ii) Overhead costs including garaging and insurance
- iii) Fuel consumption – Diesel vs Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)
- iv) Tyre consumption
- v) Maintenance costs including parts and labour charges
- vi) Driver and conductor labour costs

3. Proposed Maxi Markings and Decals for Checkered-Band Maxi-Taxis

- It is recommended that the vehicle markings match those of the associated route, for ease of identification, that is, the checkered markings which will correspond with the signage. Additionally, it is proposed that decals may be placed on a conspicuous location of the maxi-taxi to display origin and/or destination.

4. Establishment of Routes

One of the major considerations for the establishment of this new public transportation system in highly rural areas is that “there is a culture where people need to trust that the bus will be there when it is supposed to be.”³³ Therefore, the following are proposed:

a. Locations:

This requires the Ministry’s Traffic Management Branch’s collaboration with the Town and Country Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Regional Corporations, PTSC and other relevant stakeholder groups. Most countries have specified road standards for geometric and pavement design. These standards are based on traffic volumes, vehicle axle loads, topography and road function. As such, routes must be determined in accordance with these standards, current and prospective traffic volume density, as well as road design and safety towards the prevention of accidents. These routes must provide the needed support to the services offered by the PTSC and taxis.

b. Distance of Routes and Catchment areas:

Distance of Routes and catchment areas will be determined by factors such as population density, road conditions and road side infrastructure, bus stop locations and traffic conditions.

5. Upgrading of Road Facilities

In many instances, roads in sub-urban and rural communities were not built or upgraded to accommodate and sustain high volume traffic. They may be narrow or comprise narrow/ temporary/ Bailey bridges etc. Road maintenance, particularly in rural areas, would undoubtedly be a critical factor. Therefore, to successfully operationalise this initiative, roads along which the proposed routes are to be established must be rehabilitated towards long term operation with the supporting infrastructure discussed below. There is an incontrovertible

³³ Metro Magazine Article, “Progressive rural transit services offer lessons in mobility, access for all” by Robin Phillips and Cara Marcus November 27, 2019 > <https://www.metro-magazine.com/10112022/progressive-rural-transit-services-offer-lessons-in-mobility-access-for-all><

nexus between road roughness as a key factor influencing vehicle operating costs and high transport fares/tariffs.

6. Establishment of Maxi-Taxi Terminals/ Hubs and earmarking of stops and/or laybys on the various routes for passengers

In furtherance of item 3 above, there must be the establishment of route hubs/terminals and roadside infrastructure which requires the Ministry's Traffic Management Branch's collaboration with Town and Country Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Regional Corporations, PTSC and other relevant stakeholder groups. Further, bus stop signage has only been recently upgraded in urban areas and has yet to be deployed along routes in sub-urban and rural communities.

It is commonplace that low density roads in sub-urban and rural communities lack sufficient infrastructure such as proper drainage, pavement and shoulder facilities. In many such communities, there are few pavement facilities along roads. Oftentimes, the lack or ad hoc availability of pavement/footpath facilities is as a result of incomplete works/projects executed by contractors with segments of box drains and pavement works being completed while other areas are left unfinished. An example of this is the Southern Main Road particularly in the areas of Warrenville and Cunupia. Therefore, commuters of such communities are commonly seen standing or disembarking in grassy verges and exposed to the prevailing weather conditions such as flooding in the rainy season. Such circumstances fundamentally appear to negate the goal for access for all groups of society, particularly for persons with disabilities.

7. Establishment of Fares

Fares ought to be commensurate with routes and distances travelled but balanced for economic benefit to service providers. Additionally, fares for the Route may be determined in keeping with the current rates for transportation services provided by informal transportation service providers.

Consideration must be given to whether a cash, pre-paid or contactless payment ticket system ought to be established. With regard to a cash fare payment system, given the portability of cash there is a high consequent susceptibility of these service providers and passengers to become victims of criminal activity as routes will be traversing areas under low surveillance and monitoring by law enforcement agencies such as the TTPS. The dark figure of statistical data will exist with respect to robberies perpetrated against PH Taxis and White T-Vans as such operations are illegal thereby reducing the likelihood of persons reporting such incidents to the Police. The possibility of a metered system on certain routes depending on the distance travelled should be examined. Advancements with e-commerce technology involving contactless payment systems can increase patronage of public transportation systems by passengers since it ultimately offers better value for money, convenience, sense of personal safety and would encourage use of public transport.

Consideration may also be given to the development of a transport shift system for the checkered band system to ensure safe, reliable transportation or operation on the night shift or 'graveyard shift' and at early hours of the morning. This would provide persons, particularly those belonging to vulnerable groups such as women and children, with a reliable alternative to the transport service of the PH drivers during such hours. Several newspaper reports suggest that during such hours, male drivers with heinous intentions prey on females under the guise of a PH driver³⁴.

8. Incentives towards formalisation into the regulated system

³⁴ (1) LoopTT Article, "UWI student reports rape by PH taxi driver" by Dareece Polo dated FEBRUARY 25 2020 > <https://www.looptt.com/content/uwi-student-reports-rape-ph-taxi-driver> < Accessed on November 03, 2020

(2) Daily Express Newspaper Article, "Morvant woman tells of 'taxi' rape attack by Susan Mohammed dated July 05, 2019 and Updated Feb 21, 2020 > https://trinidadexpress.com/news/local/morvant-woman-tells-of-taxi-rape-attack/article_34768dc4-9f5a-11e9-a5e9-3303c2926147.html < accessed on November 03, 2020

(3) Trinidad and Tobago Newsday Newspapers Article, "Woman raped by PH driver and accomplice while man looks on", by Naline Seelal dated July 11, 2018 > <https://newsday.co.tt/2018/07/11/woman-raped-by-ph-driver-and-accomplice-while-man-looks-on/> < accessed on November 03, 2020

(4) LoopTT Article, 'PH' taxi driver charged for raping teenager" Loop News dated September 04, 2017 > <https://www.looptt.com/content/ph-taxi-driver-charged-raping-teenager> < accessed on November 03, 2020

Formalisation into the regulated system will not only encourage the operation of safer vehicles within the industry but will also give owners/drivers and passengers greater access to redress in the event of accidents. Since T-vans currently operate illegally without incurring significant costs e.g. premiums for insurance coverage as maxi-taxis or taxis and, not being registered as taxis, are not subject to the mandatory regulations eg. COVID-19 passenger number restrictions, vehicle inspection as taxis and vehicle maintenance, incentives may be required for current operations to be legitimized. Of course, the role to be played by law enforcement agencies in enforcing existing laws must not be overlooked.

Issues raised with vehicles registered as Private Vehicles plying for hire will be relevant considerations and will similarly be raised mainly regarding a proposed driver's inability to meet the permit requirements, or obtain police issued Certificates of Character. Consideration should be given to mechanisms for a parallel application process for evaluation in cases of the inability/ failure of an applicant to obtain a Police issued Certificate of Character due to past criminal record. This parallel process can be executed by evaluations conducted by a committee/panel convened by the Licensing Authority. This approach would be in keeping with the principles of restorative justice.

9. Enforcement

According to statistical data obtained from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS), the number of fixed penalty notices (traffic tickets) issued by the TTPS Traffic and Highway Patrol Branch for the years 2015, 2016, 2017 for breach of **section 21(1) of the MVRTA, Chap. 48:50** – 'Using or altering a motor vehicle or trailer for a purpose not authorised by the registration or Licensing Authority'- amounted to 113, 53, 52 traffic tickets respectively (see Table 3 below) The fixed penalty for the offence was Seven Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$750).

Table 3:
Number of Fixed Penalty Notices (Tickets) issued for breach of Section 21(1) of the MVRT Ch. 48:50 & No.2 of First Schedule MVRT (E&A) Ch. 48:52³⁵ for the years 2015 - 2017

Year	Total Number of Fixed Penalty Notices (Tickets) issued for section 21(1)	Estimated Total Value (\$) Fixed Penalty - \$750.00
2015	113	\$84,750.00
2016	53	\$39,750.00
2017	52	\$39,000.00
TOTAL:	218	\$163,500.00

This information demonstrated that during the period 2015 - 2017 there was a steady decline in the enforcement of this particular section of the law which may have significantly contributed to attitudes of wanton disregard and the proliferation of the PH taxis operating on the roads.

It is notable that statistical data obtained from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) revealed that of the number of fixed penalty notices (traffic tickets) issued by the TTPS Traffic and Highway Patrol Branch for the years 2015, 2016, 2017, only one (1) fixed penalty notice was issued for the offence of operating outside of the specified route and no fixed penalty notices were issued for the offence of a vehicle painted in such a manner to be mistaken for a maxi-taxi.

It is appreciated that by the **Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) Act, Act No. 9 of 2017**, the fixed penalty for this traffic violation was increased from Seven Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$750.00) to One Thousand Dollars (\$1000.00) and the traffic violation carries three (3) demerit points under the new demerit points system implemented in May 2020. It is anticipated that with the operationalisation of this initiative there will be robust enforcement by the various law enforcement agencies. Such robust enforcement would have the effect of slowly eradicating the illegal and daily lawless behaviour demonstrated by most operators of PH taxis and T-vans on main routes.

³⁵ The **Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Enforcement and Administration) Act, Chap. 48:52** was repealed by **Act No. 9 of 2017 on May 26, 2020.**

With respect to correlation between the fixed penalty and demerit points systems and the proposed checkered band maxi-taxi system, the Ninth Schedule provides for traffic violations and demerit points for only two (2) sections specific to the **Maxi-Taxi Act**. For example, fixed penalties in the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) and three (3) demerit points exist for the traffic violations of operation of maxi-taxis outside specified route and vehicle painted in such a manner to be mistaken for a maxi-taxi. Other violations under the **Maxi-Taxi Act** particularly in respect of the checkered band maxi-taxi system may be inserted into the Schedule.

In Barbados³⁶, there was the recent adoption of the ‘three strikes’ rule applicable to public service vehicles for non-compliance with the regulations, particularly adherence to the observance of bus stops, overloading, going off-route generally to avoid traffic jams and importuning of passengers at places not appointed for the purpose. For the first offence, drivers will be required to pay a fine of \$1,000.00; the second offence, a \$2,000.00 fine, and on the third offence, they may have their permits revoked. This may be an area for consideration in conjunction with the establishment of an updated code of conduct (discussed below) in order to change the culture of lawless driving behaviour on main routes by operators. However, this must be balanced with the existing demerit points system.

Issues of the ‘short drops’³⁷ and preferential treatment of certain passengers by maxi taxi operators/conductors are issues anticipated to occur under this new system since roads with low vehicle density or roads in suburban and rural communities are largely unmonitored by law enforcement agencies. Heavy fines, fixed penalties and demerit points should be instituted for such traffic violations since this behaviour negatively impacts the stranded commuter and contributes to the overall negative perception of the inefficient transportation system.

³⁶ Barbados - Public Transport (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2020 passed in on June 24, 2020 > https://www.barbadosparliament.com/uploads/bill_resolution/d5e0179c90211a79042bf34556445b41.pdf <

³⁷ Government News Article, “Works Minister meets with PBR "Short Drop" Maxi Taxi Drivers” dated October 02, 2014 > <http://www.news.gov.tt/content/works-minister-meets-pbr-short-drop-maxi-taxi-drivers#.X6uZcGhKhPY> <

10. Code of Conduct and Dress Code

There needs to be development of an updated Code of Conduct for maxi-taxis³⁸ operating on both the main and rural routes for dissemination on registration and receipt of permits to operate maxi-taxi. Recently in both Barbados and Guyana, updated and revised Codes of Conduct for operators of ZRs and Minibuses respectively were published to assist in the reform of lawless behaviours demonstrated by operators and conductors.

11. Phase 1 of the Operationalisation of Pilot Programme

It is proposed that the following Route Areas and Routes be selected as Phase One (1) of a Pilot Programme³⁹:

- (i) the Blanchisseuse/Las Cuevas/ Maracas/ Port of Spain Route which falls under the Route Area one (1) and is characterised by yellow band maxi-taxis. This route will be identified as Route Area 1A and will be characterized by a yellow checkered band;
- (ii) the following routes which fall under Route Area two (2) and are characterised by red band maxi-taxis:-

³⁸ See Barbados: Code of Conduct for Minibus and Route Taxis > <https://ta.gov.bb/News/Latest/Code-of-Conduct.aspx> <

Guyana: A code of conduct for Minibus operators and other personnel (2019) > [https://dpi.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/booklet Code-of-Conduct.pdf](https://dpi.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/booklet_Code-of-Conduct.pdf) <

³⁹ In the United Kingdom, there was Government funding of service experimentation which involved central government initiating innovations through a centrally-funded programme. “Such initiatives have taken place in Britain since the late 1960s, the most substantial of which were the ‘Rural Bus Challenge’ (RBC) and ‘Rural Bus Subsidy Grant’ (RBSG), introduced in 1998 (both of which have now ceased). The former applied to new types of services, usually for a three-year period. For example, these have included many of the earlier demand-responsive services, and some interurban improvements (such as Lincoln - Skegness service within Lincolnshire). Bids were invited by central government, which then made awards on merits of each case. The RBSG (allocated on a per capita basis to local authorities with population densities below a specified threshold) was generally used for more conventional types of service, enabling existing networks to be extended, and/or time periods in which services operated (for example, at evenings and weekends). Considerable innovation was produced by these grants, some of which has been sustained. However, it is important that outcomes of such innovations are carefully monitored if lessons are to be learned from their introduction. It is also desirable that it is possible for such services to be sustained following the initial period of funding (subject to sufficient usage being generated to justify this). A problem arising from some RBC services, for example, was that the level of support per trip was very high, making it difficult for service support to be continued from local authority budgets following the initial funding period.”: “International Experiences on Public Transport Provision in Rural Areas” by International Transport Forum (2015) > https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/docs/15cspa_ruralareas.pdf <

- (a) Sangre Grande/Toco/Matelot;
- (b) Lopinot/Eastern Main Road;
- (c) Sangre Grande/Tamana/Biche;
- (d) Caura/Eastern Main Road
- (e) Toco/Matelot

These routes will be identified as Route Areas 2A and will be characterised by a red checkered band; and

(iii) the Chaguanas/Tabaquite Route which falls under the Route Area three (3) and is characterized by green band maxi-taxis. This route will be identified as Route Area 3A and will be characterized by a green-checked band.

➤ **Route Area one (1) - Blanchisseuse/ Las Cuevas/ Maracas/ Port of Spain**

Route

Since this route falls under the existing Route Area one (1), it will be identified as “Route 1A” and the rural route maxi-taxi will be characterised by a ‘Yellow Checkered Band’. The communities of Blanchisseuse, Las Cuevas and Maracas have a population profile of approximately Four Thousand (4,000) persons. There are government primary and secondary schools, health centres, police stations, TTPost post shops and several businesses which provide essential services to the communities and are located along the North Coast Road and Paria Main Road. As a result of the limited transportation options available in these communities, especially to urban areas such as San Juan and Port-of-Spain, approximately twenty-four (24) T-vehicles commonly known as the “white T-vans” are currently illegitimately operating as taxis in and out of the communities in the area. Therefore it is envisioned that the operation of a rural route maxi-taxi transportation system will establish an additional legitimate and reliable mode of public transportation for these communities. Further, it is considered that this additional mode of public transportation would significantly increase the interest of local and foreign tourists to visit and travel to the numerous beaches and ecotourism destinations along the North Coast of Trinidad. It is on this basis that this particular route was identified and proposed for Phase 1 of the Pilot Programme and there is

significant preparedness by the operators of the white T-vans to start the phased implementation of the rural maxi-taxi transportation system.

The following are the proposals for the Route 1A Checkered Band Maxi-Taxi System:

1. Proposed Maxi-Taxi Stands:

The proposed stand for Route 1A - Blanchisseuse/Las Cuevas/ Maracas/ Port-of-Spain will be located in Port of Spain on either of the following streets:

- Frederick and Henry Streets; or
- on Prince Street or Keate Street, between Charlotte Street and Frederick Street.

These locations have been carefully selected to minimize any effects on traffic build-up in downtown Port of Spain. The stand would be similar to the Maraval Maxi-Taxi Stand on Duke Street; it will be able to accommodate two (2) Maxi-Taxis at a time but the intent is that these vehicles would seldom park for long periods to accumulate passengers. It is proposed that there be no stand per se along the North Coast Road in Blanchisseuse, Las Cuevas or Maracas since the drivers of these maxi-taxis will likely continue to traverse through the rural communities to collect passengers along the route to Port-of-Spain, and vice versa.

2. Proposed Designated Checkered Band Maxi-Taxi Stops (Mile Markers will be obtained):

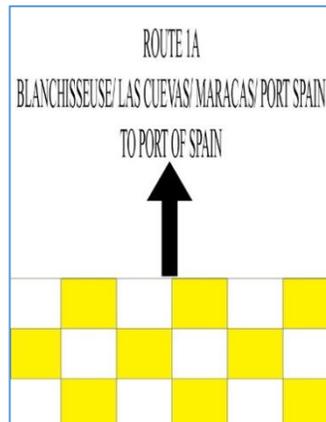
- North Coast Road – La Fillette
- North Coast Road – Las Cuevas
- North Coast Road – Maracas
- Saddle Road – Morne Coco Road

3. Proposed Checkered Band Maxi-Taxi Stop Signage:

- These checkered band maxi-taxi Stop Signs will be installed and strategically located along the Route to allow the drivers and passengers, alike, to identify the designated route and the approved stops. This will avoid any confusion between the Route 1 and Route 1A maxi-taxi operators.

- Additionally, these signs will also allow operators to avoid stopping at any existing Bus Stops for PTSC Buses which may impede the operations these buses.

Figure 1 below shows the proposed Route 1A Checkered Band Maxi-Taxi Stop Sign



It should be noted that the preliminary feedback received from the Route 1 Maxi-Taxi Association – Yellow Band by letter dated October 3rd, 2022 indicated that the Association is in favour of the proposed Checkered Band Pilot Project and it considered the implications and proposed solution for the checkered band maxi-taxis operating on the main roads within the Route Area 1 en route from Port-of-Spain to Maracas.

- **Route Area two (2)** –
- (a) Sangre Grande/Toco/Matelot;**
 - (b) Lopinot/Eastern Main Road;**
 - (c) Sangre Grande/Tamana/Biche;**
 - (d) Caura/Eastern Main Road**
 - (e) Toco/Matelot**

With the recent national infrastructural developments and projects such as the Toco Ferry Port Project, Valencia to Toco Roadway Project and the housing development projects being undertaken by private sector developers in the north eastern communities of Trinidad, there is an

increased demand for transportation in those rural communities such as Lopinot, Caura, Toco, Matelot, Tamana, and Biche. Across these north eastern remote and rural communities, oftentimes colloquially considered “behind God’s back”, there are several government primary and secondary schools, health centres, police stations and several businesses that provide essential services to the communities. It must also be noted that these communities have several tourist attractions namely:

- (i) the Lopinot Historical Complex which is on the National Trust’s official list of Trinidad and Tobago’s historic sites⁴⁰;
- (ii) the Caura River which is a very popular recreational and eco-tourism site;
- (iii) the Matelot Falls and River;
- (iv) Toco Beach and Lighthouse; and
- (v) Mount Tamana and its cave.

Given the Ministry’s current construction of the Toco Ferry Port and the Valencia to Toco Roadway Project which is a 40 kilometre stretch of roadway from Valencia to Toco, it is anticipated that the new road and infrastructure projects will significantly change the transportation landscape as well as the economic and social outlook for Sangre Grande and communities along the Sangre Grande, Valencia to Toco route. As such, there an unquestionable need for public transportation services to and from these areas in the north eastern region of Trinidad and it is on this basis that the Ministry proposes these routes for Phase 1 of the Pilot Programme.

The following are the proposals for the Route 2A Checkered Band Maxi-Taxi System:

1. Proposed Designated Checkered Band Maxi-Taxi Stops and Stands

(i) The proposed designated checkered band Maxi-Taxi Stops are as follows: -
[Insertion needs to be made here]

(ii) The proposed stand for Route 2A will be located in:

- Lopinot/Eastern Main Road – Lopinot Road, from a point 9m of south of Back Street, between Eastern Main Road and Priority Bus Route, to a point 30m south.

⁴⁰ <https://nationaltrust.tt/location/lopinot-house/>

- Caura/Eastern Main Road – Sagram Street, from a point 9m from Caura Road between the PBR and EMR to a point 50m West.
- Sangre Grande/Tamana/Biche
- Sangre Grande/Toco/Matelot
- Toco/Matelot

2. Proposed Checkered Band Maxi-Taxi Stop Signage

- These checkered band maxi-taxi Stop Signs will be installed at strategic locations located along the Route to allow the drivers and passengers, alike, to identify the designated route and the approved stops.
- Additionally, these signs will also allow operators to avoid stopping at any existing Bus Stops for PTSC Buses which may impede the operations these buses.

Figure 2 below shows the proposed Route 2A Checkered Band Maxi-Taxi Stop Sign

[Insertion needs to be made here for the mock up of the signage]

➤ **Route Area three (3) – Chaguanas/Tabaquite**

The Borough of Chaguanas is comprised of approximately 83,516 persons, which represents one of the most highly populated boroughs in Trinidad. Similar to that of the Blanchisseuse/Las Cuevas/ Maracas/ Port of Spain Route, the borough of Chaguanas is home to many primary and secondary schools, health centres and other governmental agencies. Coupled with this, Chaguanas is significantly populated with many businesses and can be seen a major hub of economic activity resulting in major employment generation. It should be noted that one of the key elements in support of employment generation and the sustainability of economic activity, is that of a reliable and safe form of transportation, for those persons who reside in surrounding communities. In this vein, the Chaguanas/Tabaquite route has also been identified as one of the proposed routes for this Pilot Programme.

Tabaquite is a Village in the Couva\ Tabaquite\ Talparo Corporation, North of Rio Claro and West of the Navet Dam. Tabaquite has a population profile of just over 3,000 residents. The main transportation system in this area is generally informal, PH and T-Vans. There are numerous government primary and secondary schools, health centres, police stations, and several businesses that provide essential services to the communities. Furthermore, the area has a number of tourist attractions such as Knolly's Tunnel, Recreation Parks and Eco Parks. The roadways in this area are not of optimal condition. As such, a more formal mode of public transportation is needed to assist the commuting population. It is considered that with the introduction of this additional mode of public transportation would significantly increase the interest of local and foreign tourists to visit and travel to the numerous ecotourism destinations in the Tabaquite area. It is on this basis that this particular route was identified and proposed for Phase 1 of the Pilot Programme.

However, it should be noted that the preliminary feedback received from the Route 3 Unified Maxi-Taxi Association – Green Band by letter dated October 27th, 2022 indicated that the Association would not be participating in the proposed Checkered Band Pilot Project.

The following are the proposals for the Route 3A Checkered Band Maxi-Taxi System:

3. Proposed Designated Checkered Band Maxi-Taxi Stops

The proposed designated checkered band Maxi-Taxi Stops are as follows: -

The proposed stand for Route 3A will be located in Chaguanas, De Verteuil Street – between John Street and Penco Street

Proposed Designated Checkered Band Maxi-Taxi Stops:

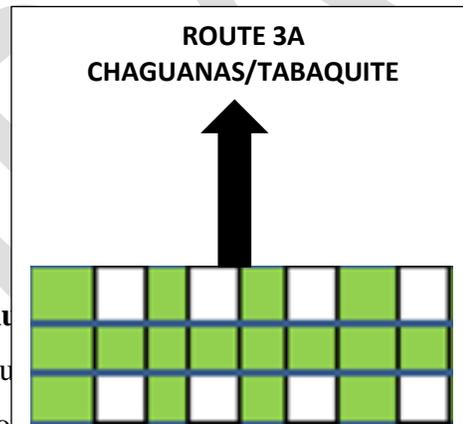
- Edinburgh Road
- Todds Road
- Mamoral/ Caparo
- Brasso Police Station

- Tabaquite Secondary School
- Guaracara Junction
- Harry's Water Park

4. Proposed Checkered Band Maxi-Taxi Stop Signage

- These checkered band maxi-taxi Stop Signs will be installed at strategic locations located along the Route to allow the drivers and passengers, alike, to identify the designated route and the approved stops.
- Additionally, these signs will also allow operators to avoid stopping at any existing Bus Stops for PTSC Buses which may impede the operations these buses.

Figure 2 below shows the proposed Route 3A Checkered Band Maxi-Taxi Stop Sign



11. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is a process that allows policy makers to assess: how an intervention evolves over time, how well the programme or initiative was implemented and whether there are gaps between the planned and achieved results (evaluation).

In seeking to ensure a successful implementation of the Pilot Programme the following are key activities that will be undertaken to ensure same: -

Monitoring

This will involve the collection of data throughout the implementation period such as (i) ridership statistics during peak and off peak hours, (ii) commuter wait times, (iii) number of trips per day, (iv) customer satisfaction surveys, (iv) average cost per trip against revenue earned per trip and (v) transit times.

In this context, the Traffic Management Branch, MOWT will seek to undertake same throughout the pilot programme.

Evaluation

Upon the completion of the Pilot, the MOWT will undertake a review of the data gathered throughout the programme to determine whether the objectives of the Pilot were met together with recommendations on the Way Forward. This shall take the form of an Evaluation Report. It is anticipated that the Evaluation report will be completed within 2-3 months after the completion of the Pilot.

6. CONCLUSION

The implementation of a regulated system by the Ministry would benefit the State as it can stimulate growth of small and large businesses within suburban and rural communities thereby creating employment and positive economic development. The successful establishment of the rural routes for the checkered band maxi-taxi system requires an examination of the following determinants:

- a) population density and demographics in communities;
- b) ongoing or earmarked construction of housing developments by private sector developers, the Housing Development Corporation and the Land Settlement Agency;
- c) existing road conditions in rural areas and communities;
- d) road infrastructure such as identification of bus stop/public service vehicle stop locations, shelter and signage; and
- e) traffic conditions.

Further a cost benefit analysis or feasibility study would also greatly assist in the design, development, possible phased deployment and long term successful operationalisation of this new initiative. The key considerations and findings emerging from the completion of a cost benefit analysis and/or impact assessment would guide the legislative requirements and the overall approach for the implementation of the new system.

With respect to the legislative framework for the successful operation of this new system, the Maxi-Taxi Act is well drafted to allow for either an amendment to the existing Act and Regulations or the creation of entirely new Regulations solely for the establishment of the new system. As indicated at Section 4, page 19 above, it is recommended that amendment of the existing Regulations be undertaken. Following the review of this policy document/discussion paper and recommendations arising from the cost benefit analysis, the development of the legislative framework will be subject to the further guidance of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel of the Legislative Drafting Department of the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs.

It is recommended that a Pilot or Phased Implementation of a checkered band maxi-taxi transportation system be undertaken. In this regard, it is recommended that the Pilot Programme or the first phase of a Phased Implementation run for an initial period of six (6) months to monitor and evaluate its efficiency and effectiveness as well as the impact on the local communities. The evaluation of the success of the first phase will inform the expansion and full operationalisation of this new system for the overall national public transportation system.

Timelines for Implementation

It is proposed that this Policy/ Discussion Paper be circulated for the feedback of all relevant stakeholders during the approximate period of February 2022 to May 2022. Following this, the feedback obtained will be assessed and further studies and analyses, as deemed necessary or advisable, would be undertaken during that period. Finally, subject to the approval of

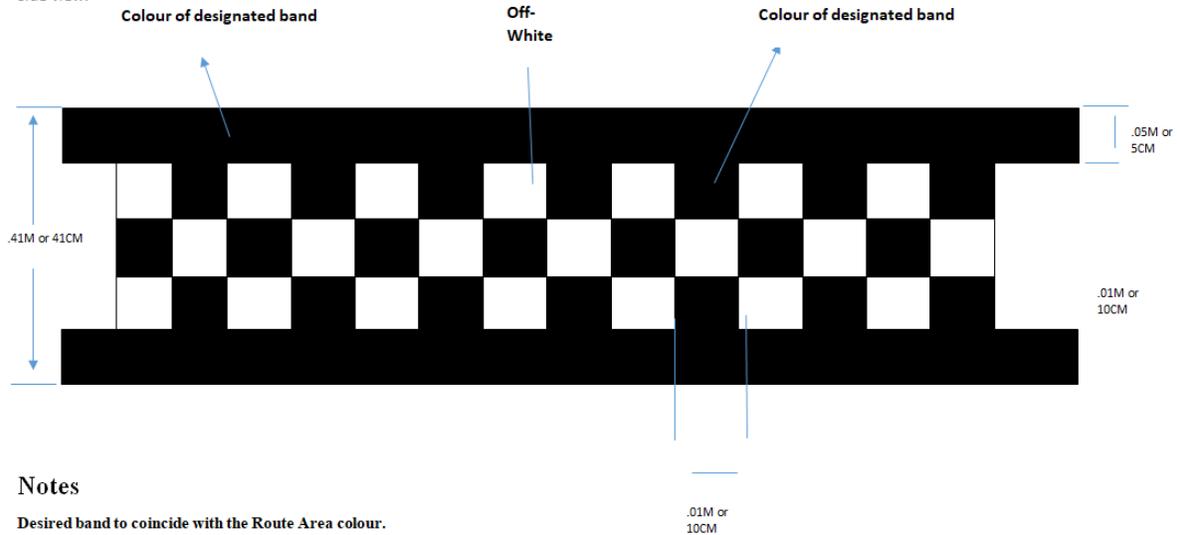
Cabinet, the relevant legislative amendments would be drafted and the legislative amendment process engaged during the approximate period of June 2022 to August 2022 with the aim of commencing Phase 1 of the Pilot Programme or of a Phased Implementation which would comprise Route 1A - Blanchisseuse/Las Cuevas/ Maracas/ Port of Spain in or about September/October 2022.

DRAFT

APPENDIX I

SPECIMEN OF CHECKERED BAND PATTERN ON MAXI-TAXIS

Side view:



Notes

Desired band to coincide with the Route Area colour.

Desired band to be .41CM or 41CM from top to bottom

The checkered layout to be .01M or 10CM in height and .01M or 10CM in width

The checkered layout is to be painted on the each side of the vehicle from the front straight down to the rear of vehicles and also the front of the vehicle.

Front

Checkered band to be located one inch under the wiper blade arm.

Checkered band to be painted .03M or 3CM above the grill or head lamps whichever is the highest point.

Checkered squares and background are to be in the same pattern as side view.

