

'Ensure policies are backed by research data'

KUALA LUMPUR: Transport advocates and experts believe that while the initiatives spelt out by the authorities for 2020 are commendable, they have to be backed by data and studies.

They also believe that the Transport Ministry should be clearer on areas of emphasis.

Traffic engineering specialist Dr Law Teik Hua said the ministry should spell out which initiative would benefit which target groups.

"The authorities have said among the initiatives is promoting the use of public transport.

"However, at the same time, initiatives are also being rolled out for private vehicles.

"My question is, which is the area of emphasis here?"

"I believe the ministry should focus on public transportation first.

"They had pledged to provide allocations to improve and maintain the public transportation network for the ease of the people and to reduce congestion on highways," he said.

Law said the introduction of the My50 and My10 programme, which offered unlimited travel passes within the Klang Valley via the RapidKL bus, BRT Sunway and RapidKL railway system, including MRT, LRT and monorail, was a good start.

Law also questioned the effectiveness of the ruling on mandatory installation of child passenger seats in all private vehicles, which would come into force beginning Jan 1.

Many parents, he said, were in the dark over the intricacies of the move, and that there were outstanding issues the ministry needed to resolve before it was implemented.

These, he said, included the cost of purchasing the child seats, where to buy them from, as well as the installation specifications.

"If the authorities want to ensure that this is successfully adopted, they have to act to resolve these issues first.

"For example, what kind of child seats should the consumers use?"

"Where should consumers get them, what are the specifications of the seats and the installation process?"

"These are questions which have yet to be properly tackled and the reason why many have decided against complying even before the law is enforced," he said.

Universiti Sains Malaysia Transportation Engineering senior lecturer Associate Professor



The introduction of the My50 and My10 programme, which offers unlimited travel passes in the Klang Valley via the RapidKL bus, BRT Sunway and RapidKL railway system, has benefited commuters. FILE PIC



Dr Law Teik Hua

Dr Nur Sabahiah Abdul Sukor voiced the need for the policies to be backed by in-depth study and research.

"Some initiatives are good, but some really need more study while some of them, such as that involving child passenger seats, are nothing new.

"There is also a need of more awareness and enforcement, especially on the child passenger seat issue and the motorcycle e-hailing service," she said.

Universiti Putra Malaysia economic analyst Dr Mohd Yusof Saari, earlier this year had told Bernama that the government should expand its existing initiatives in the public transport sector in order to reduce the cost of living.

He said incentives such as unlimited travel passes of My100



Dr Mohd Yusof Saari

and My50, which benefited commuters, who chose public transport to get around, should be continued.

Yusof said the "mini bus" service should be expanded due to the high demand, especially in the residential areas of the city.

"The introduction of mini buses (by Prasarana Malaysia Bhd) is a good thing because we know that some public transport cannot provide services to certain housing areas. Now, the problem is inefficient connectivity," he was quoted as saying.

To encourage people to use public transport, Yusof had proposed the use of a single-ticket system.

"So consumers do not have to get multiple tickets.

"Currently, to travel from one place to another, the public has to

buy separate tickets.

"That is not time or cost effective," he said.

On public transport in rural areas, Yusof said the government needed to think of a more convenient and flexible way, yet without the need for high expenses.

Citing examples in Sabah, he said there were some interior areas that used van services to help ferry the locals.

"Short routes such as from villages on the outskirts of the city to the city centre do not require bus services as it is not cost effective based on the sparse population. So travelling by van is easier and cheaper," he said.

The Malaysian Institute of Transport deputy director (Industry Network & Commercialisation), Dr Shahrin Nasir, also agreed that the unlimited travel pass should continue as it had a positive impact, especially in reducing the cost of living.

He said it would be better if such facilities were extended to other cities around the country.

Associate Professor Dr Syahriah Bachok, who is with International Islamic University Malaysia Kuala Lumpur's Architecture and Environmental Design faculty, said the policies should be formulated based on evidence or empirical studies.

She hoped that the initiatives by the ministry would generate job opportunities and spur the economy.

"I hope the projects will have a great multiplier effect, generate loads of job opportunities and boost business outlook," said Syahriah.