More people taking public transport

KUALA LUMPUR: Government initiatives and investment in public transportation since 2010 under the Urban Public Transport National Key Results Area have led to an increase in ridership.

The modal share of public transportation in the Greater Kuala Lumpur/Klang Valley area in 2010 was only 10 per cent, Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) said.

"Guided by the National Land Public Transport Master Plan established in 2013, we had set ambitious goals to achieve a modal share target of 40 per cent for land public transport in urban areas by 2030.

"With concerted efforts, in 2015, the modal share grew to 20 per cent, marking significant progress," it said yesterday.

In 2015, it said, there was an urban rail fare review exercise as prices had not been revised for 19 years.

"The immediate impact was a decline of nine per cent in ridership in 2016. However, this normalised with a significant pick up of 12 per cent in ridership in 2017, from 570,021 to 638,605.

"These numbers do not include the MRT Line ridership," it said.

SPAD said a daily ridership of 101,024 was recorded upon the full opening of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line L.

"The Light Rail Transit (LRT) Kelana Jaya Line led the growth in ridership, with an increase of 26 per cent, or 271,250 daily ridership, this year compared with 216,855 in the same period last year, it said.

It said adding to this growth was the LRT Ampang Line, which recorded an increase of 14 per cent, which translated into 184,931 daily ridership this year.

SPAD said KTM Komuter services suffered a dip in ridership this year due to the Klang Valley Double Track (KVDT) rehabilitation project, which impacted the frequency of trains.

This reduced the average daily ridership by five per cent to 103,074 this year compared with 108,023 last year, it said.

"However, we expect ridership to stabilise and pick up once KVDT rehabilitation work, which covers the upgrading of tracks and signalling systems, is completed in 2019 to modernise the 42km KTM Komuter network," SPAD said.

It said KL Monorail also saw a downtrend this year, with a reduction of 11 per cent compared with last year, bringing ridership to 53,337.

It said this was caused by the removal of five four-car trains due to safety concerns, resulting in reduced frequency.

"Prasarana is taking action to resolve this technical issue in stages," it said.

It said commuting via public transport had become relatively cheaper than owning a car, especially if one factored in the cost of ownership of a vehicle, insurance, road tax, maintenance and other expenses, including parking, fuel, toll and unproductive hours spent in traffic.

"For example, a commuter can take an MRT feeder bus to the Sungai Buloh station for RM1 and take the MRT to Pasar Seni for RM3.70, then switch to an LRT ride to KLCC for RM2.10 at an affordable RM6.80 one way.

"This does not take into account the further reduction if you use the Touch ‘n Go card and the 50 per cent concession rates for students, senior citizens and the disabled," it said.

"The Customer Satisfaction Index, an independent survey carried out by SPAD, indicated that 84 per cent of respondents were satisfied with urban public transport in 2016, an increase of 10 per cent from 2015." SPAD said.

It said these findings showed that the government was on the right track in planning and implementing initiatives under the National Land Public Transport Master Plan.

"To continue to attract more riders by making transit more seamless, SPAD will soon launch the Journey Planner in quarter four of 2017 and implement the integrated ticketing system by 2019." It said.

It said the success of the Greater Kuala Lumpur/Klang Valley area in delivering public transport projects on time was testament to the forward planning process in place.

"Many high-impact projects are being delivered, and we are making big changes to people’s lives from the position we were in 10 years ago.

"Moving forward, the government remains committed to ensure that our longer term plans to improve the bus network and increase the rail capacity on the existing lines progress well with projects such as LRT3, MRT2 and the upcoming MRT3."