

## Ministry Looking Into Ways To Absorb Staff

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Transport Ministry is still studying ways on how to absorb the staff of the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) even as its functions continue as usual. SPAD, said minister Anthony Loke, currently has 997 staff members, of whom 372 are enforcement officers. The enforcement officers, he said, would be directly absorbed into the Road Transport Department.

“For the other units such as SPAD’s planning and policy unit, we are still studying our options on how to absorb them into the ministry,” he told reporters after his working visit to the SPAD headquarters here yesterday. Loke said despite the move, all of SPAD’s functions, including licensing, studies and enforcement, would continue as usual.

He said any move to repeal or amend the Land Public Transport Commission Act – which led to the formation of SPAD – would be brought up in Parliament. “We have yet to make a final decision but in principle, it will be under the purview of the ministry,” said Loke.

The ministry, he said, was also studying the mechanism to implement a monthly RM100 unlimited pass for public transport usage in the Klang Valley, which was part of the Pakatan Harapan election manifesto. “There was a proposal but it involves a huge financial implication. So I will have to first bring this to the Cabinet for approval,” he added.

He said he had also given SPAD a month to prepare a comprehensive report on the direction of the e-hailing and taxi services in the country as well as ways to improve these. “I expect this to be ready in July and we will make the necessary announcements to improve this sector,” he said.

He also said the Government would proceed with the RM4bil Johor Baru-Singapore Rapid Transit System link, but had asked for an extension before the signing of the joint-venture agreement.

The extension was to allow the feasibility study be conducted and presented to the Cabinet, he added. The RTS, which would connect Johor Baru to Woodlands in Singapore, was one of the few rail projects planned by the previous administration and there were fears that this might also be scrapped along with the High Speed Rail and MRT3.