

EMBARGOED UNTIL 14 AUGUST 2017, 10AM

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## *Joint News Release*



### **Evolving a Caring Commuting Culture**

*#JourneywithmeSG*

The Public Transport Council (PTC), SBS Transit, SMRT and Singapore General Hospital (SGH) will launch two trials at Outram Park MRT station - the “Heart Zone” and “Heartwheels”. The two trials will take place concurrently from **14 August till 15 September 2017**.

#### Evolve a Caring Commuting Culture

2. The “Heart Zone” and “Heartwheels” are part of a wider initiative of providing platforms for commuters to assist and support other commuters who need help in their public transport journey. The hope is to evolve a caring commuting culture in Singapore’s public transport system.

#### First Trial: “Heart Zone”

3. A number of commuters who alight at Outram Park MRT station are elderly, frail or blind patients of the SGH and medical centres in the SGH Campus. They can benefit from assistance and support to get to their various destinations. Although SGH provides free shuttle bus services, PTC observed that commuters faced some difficulties locating the boarding points of the shuttle bus. Some patients may also lose their way while heading to the medical centres. The “Heart Zone” initiative thus serves these commuters who may need help navigating to the SGH Campus. These commuters can wait at two designated meeting points (“Heart Zones”) located within Outram Park MRT station. Fellow commuters (including SGH Campus staff alighting at the station on a daily basis) are encouraged to meet

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commuters at the “Heart Zone” and voluntarily bring them to shuttle bus boarding points or to the buildings on campus. The “Heart Zone” trial will take place from Mondays to Fridays, between 7.30 and 9.30 a.m. Please refer to Annex for the exact locations.

#### Second Trial: “Heartwheels”

4. Outram Park MRT station also serves as an interchange station for the East-West Line and North East Line, which are connected via a 210m pedestrian linkway. Due to the distance, elderly commuters or those with physical difficulties can sometimes find moving along the linkway a challenge. To help them navigate with greater ease along the linkway between the East-West Line and North East Line, the rail operators have provided wheelchairs, or “Heartwheels”, at both ends of the linkway. Commuters are encouraged to extend a helping hand to fellow commuters in need of these “Heartwheels” by pushing them along the linkway. The “Heartwheels” will be available throughout operational hours during the trial period. Please refer to Annex for the exact locations.

5. Said Mr Richard Magnus, Chairman of the Public Transport Council:

*“Commuters told PTC they wished they knew how to help others. Our elderly, frail and blind commuters told us how they would like to receive assistance and support. We want to build a culture where commuters care for one another in simple ways which make a big positive difference. These trials offer opportunities to connect. When commuters step forward, they not only meet the needs of others but also bring out the best in themselves.”*

6. Said Mr Gan Juay Kiat, Chief Executive Officer of SBS Transit:

*“We welcome and support these initiatives which will lead to a more gracious and collegial travel experience as commuters look out for one another. As our rail network is expanding, developing such a culture will augur well for us as it brings out the heart in our commuters. While we remain committed to providing caring, reliable, safe and secure service to our commuters, and at the same time, with our commuters helping each other, this may well elevate public travel to a whole new level.”*

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7. Said Mr Lee Ling Wee, Chief Executive Officer of SMRT Trains:

*"We support this initiative where commuters help one another. We look forward to continuing this partnership with the Public Transport Council. Both the initiative and partnership are in line with SMRT's focus on enhancing the journey experience of our commuters including those with mobility needs."*

8. Said Professor Kenneth Kwek, Chief Executive Officer of Singapore General Hospital:

*"The Heart Zone project provides our staff with the excellent opportunity to go beyond the hospital walls to help patients who have difficulty navigating their way from the Outram Park MRT station to the various institutions on SGH Campus. This is a meaningful partnership that enhances our patients' journey even before they enter our Hospital grounds."*

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**Annex: Heart Zone and Heartwheels Locations**

**Map for locations**

