The Government will almost double, to 1,000, the number of public buses it is paying for under the Bus Service Enhancement Programme.

Another 450 buses will be added between next year and 2017, with most of them expected to be on the road by the end of 2016, Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew told Parliament yesterday.

This will be on top of the 550 government-funded buses being rolled out by the end of this year, two years ahead of schedule.

Together with new buses added by the public transport operators, as well as City Direct Services and Peak Period Short Services run by other bus operators, Singapore’s total bus fleet will rise by 35 per cent.

The number of new bus routes will double from 40 to 80.

Of these, many will serve the expanding townships in the north-east, several will bolster feeder services, and about 20 will be City Direct Services, The Straits Times reported.

The Government will continue to draw from the $1.1 billion fund set aside to set up and run the enhancement programme for 10 years.

Meanwhile, a study has shown that the percentage of commuters satisfied with the public transport system fell to a six-year low last year.

There was an improvement in satisfaction with bus services and a decline in satisfaction with the MRT.

The annual survey conducted by UniSIM showed that overall, 88.5 per cent of commuters were satisfied with public transport. This was slightly lower than the 88.8 per cent recorded in 2012, and was the lowest level since 2007.

The poll of more than 4,200 commuters was conducted last October.

As before, travellers were generally happier with the MRT than with buses, although the latter has been narrowing the gap in the last two years.

The latest survey showed that 88.9 per cent of commuters were contented with the MRT system – only marginally higher than the 88.3 per cent for buses.

The survey was commissioned by the Land Transport Authority.