

BRT FACT SHEET

Triangle Regional Transit Program (TRTP) Alternatives Analysis



Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) blends the flexibility and relatively lower capital cost of buses with the efficiency of rail. BRT systems improve the convenience and attractiveness of bus service by providing upgraded amenities and reducing common travel delays. While enhanced bus systems may vary, the TRTP defines BRT as service which includes exclusive running ways, attractive stations/stops, advanced technologies, distinctive branding, enhanced vehicle design, and off-board fare collection for 80% or more of the length of the BRT line. Unfortunately, most BRT systems in the United States include significant compromises in design that reduce the performance, speed, and efficiency of the service.

The TRTP proposal for the “high-level” BRT attempts to meet the more robust performance standards of the advanced, top quality, highly successful BRT systems found in South America, an example of which is shown in the above photo.



BRT System Bogotá, Colombia (left)

Six Features of BRT Systems

1

Exclusive Running Ways BRT operates in exclusive, dedicated lanes or (slightly or significantly) elevated busways that separate vehicles from other traffic. This eliminates many of the most common delays experienced with typical bus service, including congestion and accidents.

2

Attractive Stations or Stops BRT systems feature distinctive stops or stations that offer passenger protection from the elements, travel information, and fare collection equipment. Facilities may vary from large high-quality bus shelters to full service station buildings.

3

Advanced Technologies BRT systems incorporate technologies that improve customer convenience, speed, reliability, and safety. Examples include automatic vehicle locators (AVL), priority of buses over other traffic at signalized intersections (signal preemption), and real-time passenger information systems.

4

Distinctive Branding BRT systems are marketed to distinguish BRT from local bus service. This typically includes distinctive names, logos, and special colors which may be reflected on the buses, stations, and other elements of the BRT system.

5

Off-Board Fare Collection BRT systems have payment machines at stations to allow passengers to pay before boarding. Machines can take multiple forms of payment, making the process of boarding buses faster and easier.

6

Vehicle Design Vehicle designs typically feature large windows and internal layouts and enhanced wheelchair loading that maximize passenger comfort and circulation. Multiple large doors used for both entry and exit along with low floors or high platforms facilitate faster passenger loading and unloading. BRT vehicles are often powered by ultra low-sulfur diesel or other alternative fuels.

QUICK Q & A

How does BRT differ from regular bus?

BRT combines elements from both rail and conventional bus service. However, key differences from conventional bus service include dedicated running ways, traffic signal priority, and off-board fare collection. BRT vehicles usually have higher capacities, better operational performance, and a more distinctive image than conventional bus. The combination of low-floors, multiple doors, and off-board fare payment increase overall comfort and ease and reduce the boarding time for passengers.