



Short Report

Metropolis Peer-Review-Training

Johannesburg, July 2013

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The Berlin Metropolis Initiative 'Integrated Urban Governance — Successful Policy Transfer', carried out a Peer-Review-Training workshop in July 2013, working with the City of Johannesburg. The forum took place in conjunction with the Metropolis Annual Meeting in Johannesburg. Earlier, at the Metropolis meeting in Guangzhou in 2012, the mayors of Berlin and Johannesburg, Mr Parks Tau and Mr Michael Müller, had agreed to arrange this workshop in order to review the city's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system 'Rea Vaya'.

Preparation for the Peer-Review-Training process started with drafting the *Initial Report* and collating general information on Rea Vaya BRT and key issues such as background, objectives, features, implementation, financing, stakeholder involvement, performance, impacts and challenges. It was prepared by Ms Lisa Seftel, Executive Director Transport Department, City of Johannesburg, with her team, and was distributed to the peers prior to the meeting. Thus the peers had the chance to adjust their feedback to the questions relating to the improvement of the system, which were the central content of the *Initial Report*.

The Peer-Review-Training forum started with an introduction of the BRT to the peers during the site visits on the first day. The experts from Ahmedabad, Lagos, Mexico City, Berlin and Melbourne visited the Johannesburg Road Agency (JRA) building and the control room, went on a ride with the BRT to Thokoza Park in Soweto and visited the Meadowlands bus depot. Following the site visits, Ms Lisa Seftel and her team outlined basic features and details of the Rea Vaya BRT system in a comprehensive presentation. Rea Vaya was initiated in 2006 and after only three years in August 2009 the first dedicated trunk route was operationalised from Soweto in the south-west to the inner city of Johannesburg. Today this service carries 43 000 passengers per day and travels 6.5 million kms per annum on the trunk, as well as linking to feeder and complementary buses in mixed traffic.

Picture 1: Technical visits to bus station



Rea Vaya is one of the city's key programmes aimed at promoting social cohesion and boosting economic development. Given that the system will be expanded in October 2013 and in year 2015, a range of questions regarding the systems' future improvement was presented to the peers. The questions concerned a wide range of issues: infrastructure, operation and maintenance, ITS standards, contractual issues entailed in outsourcing of services to private companies, integration of land-use, transport planning, and environmental and cultural sustainability. The peers responded to the questions on the second day in their feedback presentations and discussions.

The main outcomes can be summarised as follows. As a legacy of the apartheid system, land-use patterns in Johannesburg continue to be spread out and socially divided. The areas

between settlement areas have remained either dedicated to the mining industry or left behind as tailings dumps. The participants agreed that the Rea Vaya project has a high potential to contribute to a more compact and sustainable city. Encouraging developers to build with higher densities near the BRT corridor could intensify this potential, particularly if processes are put in place to attract public and private investment. Additionally, a development premium for the land along the corridor could be charged and used to subsidise future BRT/public transport operations. Thus, the further expansion of the BRT could have a high impact on the quality of life, on accessibility and the environment in Johannesburg. To further maximise this positive development, the appropriate approach for further planning should be to think big and bold. The entire network should be planned now with the physical realisation of the plan happening over time. It should be planned as part of a network that links the main corridors and transport-oriented development nodes. Additionally, by seeking for support for low-emission buses, including support from national government in respect of the appropriate regulatory framework, positive impacts for the environment can be maximised.

The peers were very impressed with the high quality of the infrastructure of the Rea Vaya system. However, they suggested certain changes to achieve greater operational excellence, particularly referring to infrastructure and patronage. In relation to the docking infrastructure, they suggested 'closing the gap' between buses and bus docking-ramps through a series of low-technology solutions, combined with driver training. In relation to the issue of patronage being low, especially during off-peak hours, they suggested various measures including creating turn-arounds and reducing route lengths during off-peak hours; bringing people closer to the stations through appropriate infrastructure for cycling and walking; integrating the Rea Vaya with the informal transportation sector; and giving incentives for people to travel off-peak by providing more attractive tickets. A long-term measure could be to integrate land-use planning and transportation planning in the regulatory frameworks of the city. Increasing ridership could further be achieved by improving the visibility of the system. Thus campaigns should demonstrate and create pride in the system among Johannesburg's population. Moreover, new career paths should be opened for all workers from drivers, security guards, customer-care officers and monitors to bus supervisors, technical managers and managing directors. At the same time the system's performance should be constantly monitored, especially regarding contracting and management of the bus operations.

A key element in the process of improving the system's performance, and thereby realising the vision of a caring city, is to actively involve the users in all stages of the planning. It is important to hear their 'personal stories' and to learn from them. Involvement should also be extended to the operators. Johannesburg could connect with the informal sector and the mini-bus/taxi industry as a strategic partner by strengthening political engagement, support and trust-building.

Pict. 2: Well-designed and technically well equipped bus stations



In relation to the financial sustainability of the system, Johannesburg could explore options for cross-subsidising the Rea Vaya from private car use and developments along public transport routes. This could include revenues from park-and-ride charges, through setting a premium on development rights along the BRT corridor, by adding a fuel levy to other-vehicle use, or through project or development financing.

A key issue raised during the Peer-Review-Training forum was related to several levels of 'integration'. On a strategic level, it was suggested that the future planning of new BRT lines should only be for routes with an appropriate demand. Some routes might better be suited for other modes of public transportation. However, all modes should be connected and integrated in one system. On operational level, it could mean the introduction of new park-and-ride facilities to attract more private car-users for BRT, or the redesign of surrounding public spaces for use by pedestrians or cyclists. These interventions require strong coordination and sound planning. Consequently, there is also a strong need for a clear policy and authority to transform the transport system, whether it is BRT or other modes of public transportation.

The Peer Review process has been accompanied by applying the Circles of Sustainability approach in order to elucidate critical issues that bear upon the success of Rea Vaya. The results underline the outcome of the Peer-Review-Training: 'If the Rea Vaya can change the spatial separation between the poorer south-west and the wealthier north; if the Rea Vaya can contribute to reducing carbon emissions and particulate emission, and decrease dependency on heavy fossil fuel use by cars; if the Rea Vaya can be part of changing how people move around the city—then it could potentially make a substantial difference to improving the ecological and economic sustainability of the city.' The method identified nine points where objectives pursued by the Rea Vaya are in tension. The most complicated issues are decreasing the cost of the overall service and decreasing carbon emissions.

The Peer-Review-Training was evaluated with a questionnaire. Its assessment confirmed several positive statements relating to the outcomes of the activity. It was a critical but open and constructive workshop in which various aspects of the planning, implementing and operating of BRT were mutually shared. Peer feedback was useful for the future development of Rea Vaya. Johannesburg is on the right track because BRT has and can have a big impact on accessibility, land-use planning and the economy.

The review also helped the peers. Common challenges have been identified and they learned from the sophisticated technical features, environmentally friendly processes, and up-to-date infrastructure of Rea Vaya, all of which will serve as good examples for the BRT in their home cities. All participants indicated that it would be useful to exchange more practical experience around BRTs beyond this workshop.

This perception was also shared by the participants in the 'Feedback Session on the Metropolis Peer-Review-Training' which was held on 18 July 2013 and which was open to all participants of the Metropolis Annual Meeting. After Ms Seftel presented the results of the Peer-Review-Training, and after an energetic open discussion with the peers and the audience, the Mayors of Johannesburg and Berlin agreed in their statements that the meeting brought many new and helpful insights for both, the hosts and the peers – and that Peer-Review-Training is 'a good and very well-designed method to organise and intensify exchange of experience between cities'.

Peers and Respondents

At this year's assessment on 15–16 July in Johannesburg, peers from Ahmedabad, Berlin, Lagos and Mexico City discussed the Johannesburg BRT system, Rea Vaya. The participants from Lagos and Mexico City were representing their local BRT systems, whereas the peers from Ahmedabad and Berlin were representatives of the scientific sector. Prof. Lokre (Ahmedabad) is an experienced BRT researcher and consultant and Prof. Schwedler (Berlin) is an expert for governance in urban environments. The forum was moderated by Prof. Paul James, Director of the UN Global Compact Cities Programme. The contact person in Johannesburg was Ms Lisa Seftel, the Executive Director of the city's Transportation Department.

Ahmedabad

Prof. Abhijit Lokre,

Associate Professor at Faculty of Planning and Public Policy at CEPT University, Ahmedabad and certified trainer in 'Mass Rapid Transit Systems' by GIZ, Germany

Melbourne

Prof. Paul James

Director of the UN Global Compact Cities Programme and Director of the Global Cities Institute, RMIT University.

Mexico City

Mr Guillermo Calderón Aguilera

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Lagos

Dr. Desmond Amiegbekhor Edenojie,

Deputy Director of Bus Services, Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA)

Berlin

Prof. Hanns-Uve Schwedler,

European Academy of the Urban Environment, Berlin

Presentations and full Report

The presentations which were held during the Peer-Review-Training, as well as the full report (59 pages / 4,2Mb) can be downloaded on this website:

<http://www.metropolis.org/initiatives/integrated-governance> click '+Info'

Alternatively they can be requested by contacting:

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