

BRT in Latin America – high capacity and performance, rapid implementation, low cost

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Sixteen Latin American cities have embraced Bus Rapid Transit as a key component of their transit systems. BRT was already operational in several Latin American cities, before the acronym was coined by transit planners in the US in the late 1990s. This review concentrates on nine cities, and shows the systems' high performance (5,000 – 43,000 passengers/hour/direction), general high user acceptance, comparatively low capital investment (US\$ 1.0 million/km to US\$ 12.5 million/km) and little or no operational subsidies. BRT has been a key element in transit reform, changing the way service is delivered. The systems have reduced travel time, transport cost, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and accidents. Some cities have also experienced significant positive impacts in the built environment. BRT systems' expansion is underway in most cities, and several additional Latin American cities have implemented or are in the process of implementing BRT systems. The cities have also faced some system implementation and operational difficulties due to institutional and financial constraints.

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