

Inclusive design of Cape Town's Bus System

Since the first Bus Rapid Transit System was developed as an alternative to the more expensive underground in Curitiba, Brazil, similar systems have been enthusiastically deployed in 147 cities across six continents, primarily in the Global South. Cape Town Bus System stands out for its commitment and ability to create accessibility.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS POLICY OF THE MYCITI INTEGRATED RAPID TRANSPORT SYSTEM

Year of existence:	2009
Country/region of origin:	Cape Town, South Africa
Beneficiaries targeted:	All persons, including persons with disabilities
Responsible body:	Transport for Cape Town
Stakeholders:	Public sector (transport departments)

FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2013, 15,000 daily passengers were recorded (Phase 1).
- All 35 MyCiTi stations and 161 roadside bus stops are universally accessible.
- All 379 buses have levelled boarding, spaces for wheelchairs and an audio LED screen.
- 22.4 km of accessible walking and cycling pathways.

IN BRIEF

Cape Town's MyCiTi system is, along with Johannesburg's Rea Vaya, among the first South African Bus Rapid Transit systems. Cape Town, however, clearly stands out for its commitment and ability to implement accessibility, as its Universal Access Policy is a comprehensive long-term and multi-level effort that includes universal design and attention to the entire journey. The Universal Access Policy is currently being reviewed.

INNOVATIVE ASPECTS

Benefits for all

By reaching areas that have never had this type of transport before, by accommodating passengers with disabilities and by offering a safe travel mode for women and children, MyCiTi serves everyone.

Universal design

Accessible public transportation is defined as mainstream services that can be used by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for further adaptation or specialised features.

Attention to the entire journey

The Universal Access Policy looks at the route planning to ensure that all key destinations can be reached. It has input to the infrastructure and the operation.

HISTORY

Until recently, public transport in South Africa was not accessible and lacked significant investment. In 2007, the 'Towards 2020: Public Transport Strategy and Action Plan' focused on upgrading existing public transport and on Integrated Rapid Public Transport Networks whilst highlighting the need for 100% accessibility. When Cape Town became one of the FIFA World Cup 2010 Host Cities, a fully accessible Integrated Rapid Public Transport Network was to be established. With the National Land Transport Act in 2009, the responsibility for the provision of municipal public transport shifted to the municipalities. In 2010, Cape Town approved the Business Plan for the MyCiTi Integrated Rapid Transport System, along with the Universal Access Policy. The Universal Access Policy has been developed with the input of disabled people's organisations and is a guiding component that establishes how accessibility is to be achieved. MyCiTi's implementation of Phase 1 is to be completed by 2014.

«MyCiTi's Integrated Rapid Transport System is the first universally accessible transport system in South Africa, and it is highly likely to have repercussions on all sub-Saharan African countries.»
(Guy Davies, Disability Solutions, Cape Town)

KEY FEATURES

The MyCiTi Integrated Rapid Transport system includes the establishment of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network and the integration of the BRT system with all other modes of motorised and non-motorised transport. MyCiTi concerns the entire passenger journey, including getting to the bus stop from a distance of 50 m from the journey's origin, boarding vehicles, arrival as well as reporting any problems along the way. MyCiTi paid attention to many details that aim to ensure that everyone can use the system independently. MyCiTi's key accessibility features include stations that provide level, seamless boarding onto vehicles (through the use of dedicated boarding points); wheelchair accessible toilets and wide entrance gates without inaccessible turnstiles; a new fleet of low floor kneeling vehicles (18 m buses with two wheelchair positions and 12 m buses with one wheelchair position) that have level entry, boarding bridges as well as Kassel Kerbs (allowing drivers to position their vehicle close to the bus stops without tyre damage), all equipped with audio LED screens; as well as service information in a wide variety of formats, door-to-bus-stop infrastructure (way finding/signage, including tactile signage, tactile paving, and on-demand services) and dedicated customer support staff.

IMPLEMENTATION

MyCiTi is designed to be rolled out in four phases for completion within 15 to 20 years. In October 2009, Phase 1a was approved and the National Department of Transport allocated a total of 312 million USD for 2010-13 to Cape Town. By March 2013, Phase 1A, 'a world-class BRT system in miniature', was operational. National indicators guide MyCiTi's implementation

and there is a procedure whereby the feedback of passengers with special needs is used to constantly improve the system. The aim is to eventually build a safe, reliable, inclusive, and cost-effective transport network within 500 meters of 75 percent of the homes in the city.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

In 2012, the city established Transport for Cape Town, which is charged with the implementation of its 2013-2018 Integrated Transport Plan and the integration of the MyCiTi BRT system with other transport modes, with rail being chief amongst them. The Universal Access Policy is therefore being reviewed. In 2014, an audit by DPOs and an evaluation study will be conducted.



Universal access of the MyCiTi system in Cape Town, South Africa © Guy Davies, Disability Solutions

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