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Integrated Transport



## A Photographic Tour of Ahmedabad's Janmarg BRT System

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BRT terminal at Kankaria Lakefront. Photo by Prajna Rao.

[Prajna Rao](#) is a transport planner at the [Centre for Sustainable Transport in India \(CST-India\)](#), a member of the [EMBARQ Network](#), which produces this blog. She provides a photographic overview of Ahmedabad's new BRT system, known as Janmarg, which has garnered recent praise for being a ["best practice"](#) of mass transit in Indian cities.

Costing 44 lakhs (\$95,000) each, high-quality BRT stations in Ahmedabad signal a well-deserved turnaround in attitudes towards public transport infrastructure in Indian cities. The stations, designed by Prof. Vijay Arya and Prof. Meghal Arya from CEPT University, not only offer a bold image for Ahmedabad's bus rapid transit brand, but also attest to the system's efficiency, inclusivity and comfort.

Here are some of the more sophisticated features:

### **Median Side Location – Prioritizing Transit**

The Janmarg stations are located at the median, catering to boarding and alighting from buses in both directions. The median location also supports the movement of buses on the fastest lane in the right-of-way. It is important to note that the fastest lane is reserved for public transport instead of private vehicles, which have enjoyed way too much privilege, for way too long.

The choice of a median-lane corridor is pertinent especially in the Indian context, where curb-side lanes are soft-edged and support a variety of spillover street activities that could be threatened by a high-speed transport system, if it were to ply on the curb-side.



Median side location of BRT station. Photo by Prajna Rao.

#### **Commuter Access – Convenient and Safe**

The stations are spaced at 300 to 700 meters, depending on ridership density. Pedestrian access is at-grade, facilitated by zebra crossings at all station intersections. Bollards block erring motor bicyclists from crossing lanes and allow for the safe passage of transit users from median bus stations to the footpaths. Access for the physically challenged is eased by ramps and low height handrails.



At-grade crossing for BRT commuters. Photo by Prajna Rao.

#### Off-board Ticketing and Checking – Speedy Commuting

Paper tickets are issued at the entrance and checked at alighting points by ex-army personnel hired by Janmarg. While the off-board ticketing system reduces the dwell time by rapid boarding and alighting, the presence of a human interface aids the transition of users into the newly introduced system.



Off-board ticketing. Photo by Prajna Rao.

#### Information Systems – Easy to Navigate

Route maps with information on fares make the bus network fairly comprehensible to its users. Visual and audio announcements only make it better.



Information boards. Photo by Prajna Rao.

#### **Station Design – Enhancing Public Space**

The station consists of two bays in each direction servicing 200 to 5,000 passengers per day. Built at a height to match the floor of the buses, the station offers level boarding, making it easy for the elderly, children and the physically challenged. Tactile floor tiles also support use of the system by the visually impaired.



Public space extensions of the BRT. Photo by Prajna Rao.

The floor and roof are finished with form concrete while tensile ropes and wooden cylinders form the wall-screen. The stations are thus open and airy, making it climatically suitable for Ahmedabad. It also brings down operational costs, reducing the need for fans and other mechanical ventilation devices. Seating is inbuilt and can accommodate 15 to 20 passengers at a time. In some parts of the city, the transit station extends to offer seating and landscaping for people to read, relax and mingle. Such activities around the station enlarge its scope from being a transit stop to an enlivened public space in the city.



Open, airy interiors of Kankaria Terminal. Photo by Prajna Rao.

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