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The People's Way: Enhanced Urban Mobility

by MEENA KADRI on APRIL 28, 2010



Earlier this year I checked out a robust, sustainable urban transport strategy supported by digital technology and user-centric design which earned the global [Sustainable Transport Award](#) from Washington. Ahmedabad's *Janmarg* (People's Way) initiative incorporates dedicated bus corridors amongst other interventions to prioritize multi-modal, eco-smart transport options to serve a population fast approaching 6 million. By analyzing current and emerging local mobility patterns and aspirations alongside concerns for accessibility, safety, energy efficiency and connectivity – urban planners were able to adapt the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) model which had transpired from developments in [Curitiba](#) and [Bogota](#). Most importantly its impact is being felt at street-level in a city which encompasses both tradition and modernity.

Exploring the intersection of innovation, collaboration and social change.

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Kunal Bhatia May 26, 2010, 9:43 PM

Lovely photography. Says a lot about the project. Thanks for bringing it to light.

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Jai Mrug January 2, 2011, 3:54 PM

Excellent piece with lovely photography.

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mpmathew February 28, 2012, 8:36 PM

We hope that Bangalore will get janmarg type bus rapid transport system
very
soon, otherwise Bangalore will explode due to traffic

LINK

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Ahmedabad is India's seventh largest city and fifth richest (ahead of Delhi and Mumbai), providing Gujarat with a thriving centre of commerce while hosting a large student population. Like most Indian cities its roads are becoming more strained as an increasing number of private vehicles compete for space with buses, trucks, rickshaws, pedestrians, hawkers, bicycles, cows, camels and the occasional elephant. While some areas of the city flourish via industries such as pharmaceuticals, textiles and construction – others flounder – and all are exposed to mounting levels of pollution. Faced with such issues the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation approached one of the city's prominent tertiary institutions, the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT), to explore and propose solutions.



Consulting architect Meghal Arya applauds the breadth of the planning considerations, which accounted for users, providers and operators. “Janmarg is likely to raise the whole city’s value,” she says, “but best of all it raises expectations about civic services in India.” Arun Amrutla (above), an Ahmedabadi man who has

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been crippled since birth, seems to agree. “It’s so easy for people like me to get on and off the Janmarg buses,” he says. This kind of system, he continues, can truly change people’s lives — especially those who are physically and financially challenged. “Janmarg gives us access to parts of the city that we couldn’t access before — for education, employment or enjoyment — so it’s more our city now than it ever has been.”

Read my full coverage of Ahmedabad’s Janmarg initiative on *Places* (Forum of Design for the Public Realm) at [Design Observer](#).





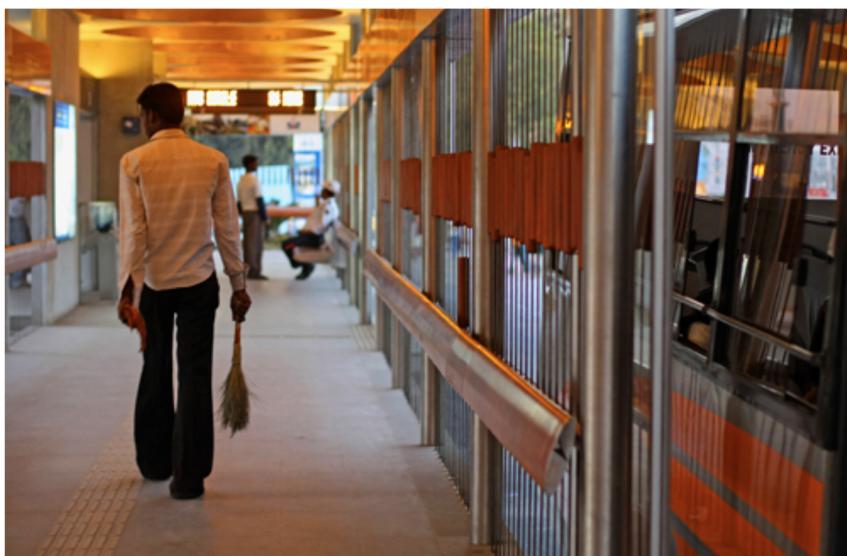
Bus operators Pancal Kirti and Jitendra Patel – who received yoga classes to encourage physical resilience and solidarity as part of their training.





Eight year old passenger Rudri Mehta travels with her mother to visit popular recreational spot Kankaria Lake.





Bus shelters, designed by Arya Architects, employ passive solar design.





Janmarg includes cycling and walking lanes. These pose challenges given that they have not previously been common in Ahmedabad but awareness building initiatives aim to shift attitudes and behaviours in the city.





The service attracts a wide range of passengers from youth to the elderly, factory owners to tribal migrants. Many cite ease of use and timely arrival as key drivers for using the service over alternate modes of transport.



Well over two hundred religious structures were relocated by negotiation to make way for bus lanes. Three, including this one, remain – constituting a kind of tribute to enduring tradition within progressive urban development.

