



BHF Southern African Conference

**CASE STUDY: COJ's BUS RAPID TRANSPORT (BRT)
PROJECT**

BY REUBEN DENGÉ



I find it very interesting to present this topic on BRT to a highly esteemed audience like yourselves. People whom, to my mind, are totally au fait and more involved with matters relating to the National Health Insurance (NHI) and of course other medical related issues!

After consultation with the organisers of this BHF conference, we agreed that my presentation should focus on:

- ❖ Challenges and how these were circumvented
- ❖ Consultative Process and Integration into the overall public transportation system
- ❖ Achievements
- ❖ Skills Development
- ❖ Learning Points

- A growing consensus amongst transport experts worldwide is that steps be taken to minimize the impact of private vehicle use in cities
- Globally, city leaders are developing strategies to discourage the use of private vehicles in cities
- Solutions include the imposition of high parking fees in inner cities, expensive tolls as well as the outright banning of certain types of vehicles during peak times of the day in specific areas (e.g. CBDs)
- As Johannesburg, we are convinced that the introduction of an affordable, safe, clean, fast, effective and efficient public transport system will form a key part of response to these challenges
- The Strategic Public Transport Network plan was in the public domain for some time and out of that grew the initiative for the BRT transport system.

- Public transport in Johannesburg has played a critical role in providing transport to the public for over a century
- Currently the Taxi industry is the backbone of public transport in Johannesburg, carrying approximately 72% of passengers
- About 12 500 registered taxis provide short-distance services daily
- The Taxi industry is also one of the largest Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) businesses in the City.
- Citizens of Johannesburg undertake a total of 3.5 million trips every day. Nearly half (47%) is by public transport, of which 773 000 (72%) trips are by minibus taxi, 230 300 (14%) are by train, and 148 050 (9%) are by bus

CHALLENGES FACED

- Consultation with stakeholders and public participation
- Level of over-expectation from communities re job creation;
- Ongoing security threat;
- Sourcing funding and other resources.
- People didn't take the BRT system seriously as they felt "it would never happen" reminiscent of the prophets of doom who "prophesied" the reality of the Soccer World Cup tournament not taking place in South Africa
- Resistance to transformation –adherence to the old system of running taxis;
- Some negativity from parts of the community for example: the Inner City routes. Potential ticket vendors reluctant to put bus stickers up in their windows - they were scared of being targeted by taxis;
- Difficult sector
- Skills transfer, mentorship and well trained staff – an integral part of the success of the BRT

Although it is an accepted fact that consultation is a cornerstone in ensuring buy in from various stakeholders, it sometimes can be one of the biggest stumbling blocks in practice. However, what is of paramount importance is:-

- How to go about it, because this must be done
 - Who to consult with
- How long is the consultation process supposed to be - how long is a piece of string
- At what stage is one supposed to move from a consultation process to a negotiation process

The BRT project was unduly criticised by some role players for non consultation. This resulted in huge delays to the successful implementation of the BRT as will be reflected to later within this presentation.

The paper provides a detailed chronological depiction of the events which led to the establishment of a successful Rea Vaya project, which I will not be going through at this stage.

In the interest of time, the following salient points are highlighted : -

- The then Minister of Transport Jeff Radebe held a Public Transport Summit at Vista University where a policy regarding an Integrated Rapid Public transport Network was adopted.
- The City of Johannesburg resolved to upscale Strategic Public Transport Network (SPTN) an Integrated Transport Plan that made provisions for taxis and buses to run on 325 kilometres of special left-hand public transport lanes to full BRT in Johannesburg to be known as Rea Vaya
- February 2007, Greater Johannesburg Regional Taxi Council and Top 6 formed a joint BRT taxi steering committee and technical working committee made up of 18 affected associations for Phase 1 of the BRT.

- In February 2007, Former President Thabo Mbeki announced BRT in State of the Nation Address
- In November 2007, Top 6 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Johannesburg, wherein they agreed to support the BRT
- In October 2008, at a Public Transport Summit, SANTACO raised concerns on the need for a National Framework document to guide the implementation of BRT in four cities. The National Department of Transport agreed.
- On the 04th November 2008, Minister Radebe, MEC Jacobs and the Executive Mayor Clr. Amos Masondo opened the prototype Rea Vaya station in Joubert Park
- On the 05th of December 2008, the Department of Transport during a meeting at Gallagher Estate, agreed to draw up a national framework guiding local level BRT negotiations and funds were made available to SANTACO to hold road shows on BRT .

- On the 20th of April 2009, at a SANTACO national meeting President Zuma agreed that '*we should hold our horses*' until a new administration is formed
- On the 19th of May 2009, Johannesburg and three other BRT Cities' leadership representatives met with the new National Minister, Sbu Ndebele and Deputy Minister, Jeremy Cronin.
- On the 28th of May 2009, Minister Ndebele by letter requested the Executive Mayor not go ahead with the operations for the Confederations Cup and that Joburg should work hard towards the implementation of BRT on the 1st of September 2009

- On the 11th of June National Department of Transport, called a Summit, where Minister Ndebele, Deputy Minister Cronin and SANTACO President, Mthembu:
 - Agreed that the concerns of the taxi industry should be addressed through a “ten a side” National Working Group.
 - Issues to be addressed included taxi recapitalisation, entrepreneurship development, operating licensees and operating license boards, legislation and BRT

- In July 2009, the National Department of Transport called various meetings of government to prepare for the Joint National Working Group deliberations. Five sub-committees of working groups were agreed upon together with draft Terms of Reference. The City of Johannesburg attended all the meetings.
- Early in August, meetings were held between senior National Department officials and SANTACO in an attempt to reach a better understanding of the differing expectations of what should be in the Memorandum of Agreement

- Project has created decent jobs for people – 3300 new jobs created
- Affordability of the system to commuters;
- First City in Africa to implement such a system;
- Transformation process has been bolstered by the City procuring buses directly instead of procuring the busses through the operating company – this lightens the load for future taxi owned company;
- The City is now offering commuters a first class service with a recognisable brand which caters for individuals with disabilities;

Rea Vaya Total Number of Spectators visiting the World Cup Games

- Total number of spectators transported by Rea Vaya from Conhill Park and Ride was 106 600
- Total number of spectators transported by Rea Vaya to and from Westgate Transport Hub was 121 806
- Total number of spectators transported by Rea Vaya to and from various stations on the T1 route (CBD and Soweto) was 78 624
- Total number of spectators transported by Rea Vaya was 307 030, and
- Average number of spectators transported was 20 468 per game (to and from).

- In line with our government's mandate, job creation is an important element of the Rea Vaya project,
- BRT has created new jobs by virtue of the CAPEX spend – about R2 billion.
- Rea Vaya has already created about 3300 new jobs. It is expected to eventually create more than 29 000 jobs.
- The BRT operations aims to be “employment-neutral”, meaning that all jobs “lost” from the current public transport operators will be replaced with new jobs in the BRT.
- Most informal jobs in the taxi industry will be replaced by formal jobs in the BRT operating companies, with properly regulated conditions of employment and improved working conditions such as shorter hours which in turn equates to enhance passenger safety.
- The current operators will become the owners of BRT and the current company managing BRT is transferring skills to them

- Initially public participation went too far and BRT was dictated to by the public
- Protracted negotiations with the taxi industry caused most of the delays within the project
- The system design – people coming in at different stages
- Original idea was to launch Rea Vaya for the Confederation Cup but this did not happen for many reasons: e.g. national taxi association wanted Joburg to negotiate at national level
- Project Planning and Management as well as advocating the process successfully to the masses

Correlation between the BRT and the NHI projects,- some similarities include:

- Both are of National Importance to our Country
- Both are focused on servicing the public at large
- Both were or are opposed to by a certain portion of the population
- They must both be an affordable model to the user
- They both impact on the social responsibility of Government
- Both were declared as “non starters” when they were conceptualised
- Both projects required “buy in” from various stakeholders including the President of the Country and Cabinet Ministers, MECs and Executive Mayors
- Both projects originally had certain “stakeholders” who are resistant to change
- Consultation, negotiation and lobbying for support including widespread communication is an integral part of the success of these projects.
- Project Planning and Management as well as advocating the process successfully to the masses

- A fully functional best practice Health care service to the people
- An affordable Health Care System for all to be proud of in South Africa
- A sustainable model which thrives on transparency
- An NHI which is a victory for the people of South Africa
- Indeed a system for the country to be proud of

- BRT is a victory for Johannesburg!
- BRT is a victory for Gauteng
- BRT is a victory for South Africa
- BRT was a victory for the 2010 World Cup!
- BRT is a victory for public transport.
- BRT is a victory for our people!

- We can conclude that both the BRT and the NHI projects have managed to incite and attract huge amounts of discussion amongst the broad population of the country
- Similar challenges face both projects
- Both projects, it is believed will ultimately serve the Nation as a whole
- Communication to the masses who are involved in the utilizations of the service is one of the key factors to ensure success.



THANK YOU