Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in Strasbourg, France: Line G.

An example of a successful European BRT solution for medium-sized cities.

The Line G in Strasbourg is a benchmark example for sensible urban integration and rapid implementation of a BHLS line. BHLS stands for Buses with High Level of Service – the European version of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). As a special feature, the BHLS project initiated an urban development project along the corridor with focus on supporting urban renewal in a social housing area (“Cité”) while connecting a commercial area with the city’s main train station in the center.

Key data for the BRT concept*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Inauguration</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Frequency (rush hour)</th>
<th>Average speed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30/11/2013</td>
<td>5.2 km (80% exclusive lanes) with 12 stops</td>
<td>1 bus every 4 minutes</td>
<td>20 km/h</td>
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<tr>
<th>Daily passenger load (total)</th>
<th>Population served</th>
<th>Investment costs (excluding vehicles)</th>
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<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>18,300</td>
<td>4.8 million €/km</td>
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*As of 01/2017

Strasbourg in brief*

Population:
280,000 (City)
490,000 (Eurométropole)
760,000 (conurbation)
Population density (city): 3,500 inhabitants/km²
The initial situation.

Strasbourg had been successfully developing its Light Rail Transit (LRT) system since 1994. By 2017 Strasbourg had six LRT lines labeled A–F with more than 60 km network length. The design of vehicles and stations had already been pioneering, defining the standard which the city wanted to achieve when choosing to develop the Line G.

A cost-benefit analysis revealed that in the given urban context along the Line G corridor, BHLS and not an extension of the LRT network would be the best choice. Hence, the city decided to build a BHLS line of the same quality as the existing LRT lines with the aim to offer customers the equal public transport experience.

In addition the project has been used as an urban development project, connecting work places with the city center and supporting the transformation of a social housing area from the 1960s/70s. Accordingly, several old social housing blocks in proximity of Arago station were removed in order to initiate urban renewal and to give the quarter new development opportunities.

The solution: BRT.

After only two years of planning and one year of construction, the 5 km long BHLS Line G has been operating successfully since its inauguration in November 2013. Providing a rapid and comfortable transport connection, the buses have been well-accepted by customers.

A special feature of the 11 Citaro G NGT buses is the significant focus on exterior and interior design, making the new line stick out among the other bus lines. A metaphorical connection between the 18 m long articulated vehicles and the city’s historic heritage is spun by the coloring concept featuring the basic colors: red, yellow, blue, white and black. It is a homage to the city’s Aubette, an entertainment quarter of the city, and Theo von Doesburg, a Dutch artist, who as a representative of the “de Stijl” movement, had designed the city center in 1928.

The result: BHLS Line G in Strasbourg.

Strasbourg is a prime example of how to adapt BRT to the context of European cities, while demonstrating how public transport projects can be used as urban development projects. It shows how integrated planning with focus on high quality and excellence in design can lead to successful bus-based public transport.