

# Peshawar: Building out Accessible and Inclusive Public Transport for All



# Timeline of Zu Peshawar BRT system implementation:



**2013**

Request for technical assistance and pre-feasibility study submitted by the Provincial Government Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the City Development Initiative for Asia



**2016**

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mass Transit Ordinance establishes the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Urban Mobility Authority (KPUMA)



**2016**

Feasibility study of a recommended BRT corridor conducted with help from a \$1.5 million grant



**2017**

Hybrid vehicle technology approved



**2017**

\$335 million loan agreement between Asian Development Bank and the government of Pakistan signed



**2017**

The provincial government approves the BRT project, followed by an approval from the national government



**2017**

TransPeshawar established



**2017**

Gender Action Plan developed



**2017 - 2020**

Construction process involving relocation of pre-existing residents



**2019**

First batch of hybrid buses delivered



**2022**

Planned completion of Phase 1 BRT project



**2021**

Bicycle-sharing system introduced



**2020**

Zu Peshawar launches amid COVID-19 pandemic



# 1. Background

Zu Peshawar corridor with cityscape in the background.  
Source: TransPeshawar.



The city of Peshawar is the capital of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Northwest Pakistan. As the sixth-largest city in the country, Peshawar has faced numerous difficulties in recent years, including terror attacks and an influx of more than 400,000 Afghan people seeking refuge in the city. While the city's population has boomed to approximately 2 million residents, an [estimated 40% of its population lives below the poverty line](#).

[Just a few years ago](#), Peshawar had been struggling with congested streets filled with private cars, pedestrians, and small informal public transit vehicles such as vans, pickup trucks, and buses. Informal public transport vehicles operating without permits competed aggressively for passengers; they were filled to uncomfortable and hazardous capacities and the way that the vehicles were operated exacerbated congestion.

Minibusses (left) and wagons (right) have been one of the main forms of Peshawar's public transport. While providing an essential service to populations, they are not comfortable or safe to people with disabilities or women, and they contribute to congestion.  
Source: TransPeshawar.





According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), such vehicles served 70% of the total demand for motorized transport, yet they only accounted for 43% of traffic on the roads. Formal and informal bus stops lacked basic schedule and itinerary information; the government had no control over the supply, demand, or quality of vehicles. Motorized travel in Peshawar contributed up to 70% of the city's air pollution, which the monitoring station at the US Consulate regularly registered as "hazardous."

Meanwhile, access remained a challenge for low-income residents and women, many of whom travel on foot or use the public transport system. Access to public transport was almost nonexistent; only people with relatively higher incomes or who had to make a critical trip could afford to travel by car or taxi. At the same time, Pakistan has been facing greater heat waves and more intense rains. Much of the existing infrastructure was not built to withstand these extremes.

To address these challenges, the city made an outstanding commitment to improving the welfare of its residents through an innovative new bus rapid transit (BRT) system, Zu Peshawar. They have been making improvements to walking, cycling, and overall access to the city while also investing in infrastructure upgrades to prepare for a changing climate and more extreme weather events.

Children travel to school navigating through spacious and safe stations of Zu Peshawar.  
Source: TransPeshawar.





## 2. Zu Peshawar Public Transport Service

First phase of Zu Peshawar features 10 routes totalling 27 km of BRT corridor. Several more routes are planned to open in 2022.  
Source: TransPeshawar.



Zu Peshawar is the fourth BRT system to be launched in Pakistan; it is the first to achieve a gold standard on the Indian subcontinent and it is fully accessible. It integrates non-motorized transport, travel demand management, and transit-oriented development planning to completely transform mobility and quality of life for city residents.

### Key milestones and impact of Zu Peshawar



Pakistan's first hybrid, accessible mode of public transport; First Gold Standard BRT in country and region



Record ridership of 267,000 passengers in a day, with 21% of motorized trips done on Zu Peshawar; Women comprise 20% of BRT ridership (up from 2% previously on public transport)



31,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> diverted in the first year of operation



60% reduction in travel time from end to end along corridor



First dedicated bike lanes and bikeshare system in country; 6% increase in cycling trips since implementation

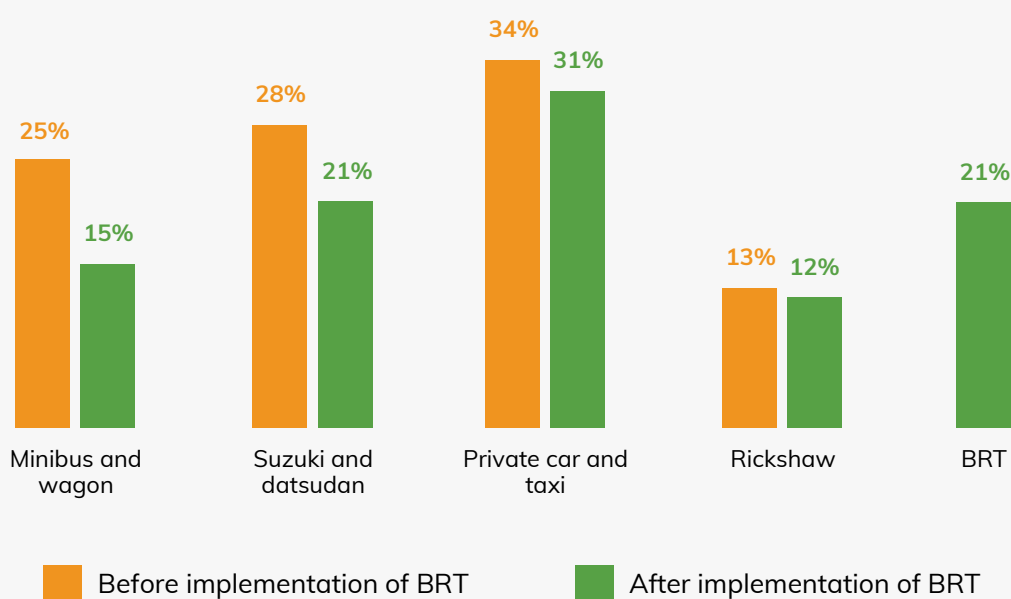
## Operations

The Zu Peshawar system is managed by [TransPeshawar](#), a publicly owned company under the Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It handles operations and the maintenance of the Peshawar BRT system, along with procurement (bus and system control) and the implementation of the city's Bus Industry Restructuring Program (see below).

Each day from 6 am to 10 pm, 158 buses carry over [250,000 passengers](#) with an average wait of 2.5 minutes between buses (also known as headway). The buses maintain an average speed of 34 km/h for express busses, and 27 km/h for buses stopping more frequently. 38 buses travel per hour in each direction and the buses on express routes arrive every four minutes on average. According to TransPeshawar, new ridership records have been reached in the first half of 2022, achieving the highest ridership of 267,000 passengers.

A survey of motorized modes of transport estimates that 21% of trips have taken place on BRT since the implementation of the system. The system introduces new technology for riders, including a Zu Mobile App and a rechargeable Zu Card for fare. The Zu Mobile App allows users to access the bus schedule, check expected arrival and departure times, locate bikes in Zu Peshawar's bikeshare system, and pay bus fare and bike rental fees. For ease of use, riders can recharge Zu cards at BRT stations or use their Mobile App.

Modal split survey for motorized travel before (2017) the implementation of Zu Peshawar and after (2021). Bicycle use data was not available at the time of the survey, however, a 6% increase of trips by bicycle (bikeshare or personal) is estimated to have occurred in the same timeframe. Source: TransPeshawar and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Government.



Minibus and wagon, Suzuki and datsudan operate on fixed routes with fixed stops, and use a fare structure



## Zu Peshawar key technical details



### Vehicles

- 244 hybrid buses in fleet, 158 in operation (with additional 86 buses planned to be added to fleet in August 2022)
- 18 m buses with 125-person capacity
- 12 m buses with 75-person capacity
- Women-only entrances and spaces
- Seats for transgender persons and older people; spaces for wheelchairs
- Air conditioned
- CCTV



### Routes and stations

- 27 km of BRT corridor and 58 km of off-corridor routes
- 10 routes including 5 direct routes, 2 limited stop routes, and 3 express routes
- Dedicated lanes for the BRT with passing lanes at stations
- 30 BRT stations, 156 off-corridor bus stops
- 2 depots (one east, one west), 1 staging area where buses wait during the off-peak hours
- Elevators and ramps with tactile paving tiles in all stations
- Level boarding from station into bus
- Water fountains at stations
- WiFi and CCTV at all stations



### Integration

- 54 km of dedicated bike lanes parallel to corridor (some still under construction) - first in country
- Bikeshare integrated with BRT both physically and with the fare: 32 bikeshare stations and 360 gender-inclusive bikes - first in country
- Bike parking at all stations
- 67 km of wide, accessible pedestrian paths parallel to corridor, including a 4 km skyway for pedestrians and cyclists - first ever investment in pedestrian infrastructure in country



### Resilience

- Energy-efficient streetlights
- Drainage systems that help climate-proof the system

## Impacts: climate and environment

Thanks to the fully hybrid bus fleet, which aims to take private cars and outdated vans and buses off the road, the city estimates that the system reduced Peshawar's greenhouse gas emissions by 31,000 tons in the first year of operation, while at the same time improving the city's air quality.

Development around the BRT lines includes infrastructure for non-motorized transport, including bike lanes and wide footpaths (see below on walking and biking). Additionally, transit-oriented development includes new drainage systems around the main corridor as well as energy-efficient streetlights. Commercial hubs inside the bus depots and stations aim to create pedestrianized, accessible spaces that will allow riders to meet their everyday needs without long car trips.

## Impacts: access and inclusion

The BRT system has cut travel time along the city's east-west corridor by over 60% from **2 hours to just 45 minutes**. TransPeshawar estimates that this time saving amounts to PKR 60.3 billion in cost-savings for the users. At the same time, TransPeshawar and the city have committed to keeping fares low and accessible to all citizens. In their first months in service, Zu Cards were provided to riders free of charge to encourage residents to try the system; they now cost PKR 150 - or just under \$1. Fares are set on a distance-based scale, starting at 10 PKR (\$0.05) for 0.1-5 km traveled and up to 50 PKR (\$0.29) for 40.1 km or more.

*"With BRT, it is very economical. I used to take a taxi to travel, paying more than 10 times [the cost of public transport]. You can imagine how expensive that was."* — **Shabuddin**, 32, a wheelchair user.

The Zu Peshawar system has improved access, especially for female riders and persons with disabilities, with targeted infrastructure and interventions to ensure their comfort and safety while traveling. It now meets international standards, and for the first time, women and people with disabilities now have a safe and accessible choice for moving around the city on public transport.

Women and children ride the BRT comfortably. Source: TransPeshawar.



Before BRT, informal public transit was unreliable and risky, especially for female travelers. Women faced harassment from drivers and from fellow passengers on crowded buses and vans; they only constituted 2% of all public transport users. Now, all Zu Peshawar bus stations include separate waiting areas, bathrooms, and ticket booths for women and all buses have designated priority seating for women. As a result, **women now account for 20% of passengers on the system**. Gender audits and focus groups guided by the Gender Action Plan (GAP) helped inform these inclusive solutions. Implementing and improving the GAP will continue as the project grows. TransPeshawar is currently working on another survey, soliciting feedback from women and persons with disabilities to inform changes to the GAP indicators.

Previous public transport systems also made it impossible for wheelchair users to travel through the city independently. Zu Peshawar offers universal access through the use of 100% step-free entrances and exits as well as level boarding at all stations on the corridor. Stations also include priority ticket counters for older people and those with disabilities.



### 3. Implementation Process

One of the BRT stations connected to a bus depot with charging infrastructure. Source: TransPeshawar.



#### Securing financing

The City of Peshawar partnered with the Asian Development Bank to plan, implement, and monitor the Zu Peshawar system. ADB provided technical and consulting assistance as well as a \$10 million project design advance loan in November 2016, in conjunction with Cities Development Initiative for Asia. This loan allowed the city to prepare engineering designs and operational plans as well as procure necessary civil works and equipment. The capital costs of the project were also supported by Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while the operational costs were financed by the Provincial Government. In total, ADB and the AFD provided about \$550 million to co-finance the project implementation including complete design, civil works, depots, bus scrapping and assembling a new fleet, commercial plazas and bikeshare. The project evaluated and implemented different non-fare revenue streams such as advertisements on corridors and inside stations, renting out commercial spaces, the establishment of “tuck” shops at stations, and the provision of space for ATMs at stations.

The total non-fare revenue is estimated to yield around 10% of the anticipated total revenues. TransPeshawar is also looking for other streams of revenue or financing options such as land value capture, congestion pricing and taxes. In addition to the above, three commercial plazas and park and ride facilities are under construction and will become part of the project in 2022. The commercial and parking revenue will also help in bridging the expenditure revenue gap.

#### Enabling action: policy and institutions

Peshawar’s BRT project became a driver in Peshawar and the province for initiating and expanding government institutions that would support operations and serve as a model for similar projects elsewhere.

In 2016, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Urban Mobility Authority (KPUMA) was established for the province to approve budgets for new projects and establish special purpose companies in every municipality. KPUMA also mandates policy approvals for urban mobility solutions.

TransPeshawar was established by KPUMA as one such special purpose company for the implementation, operation and maintenance of the BRT project in Peshawar. The company was responsible for framing and approving policies for the new project based on market dynamics and in accordance with international standards. TransPeshawar distributes contracts to private providers based on international best practices for services such as IT, janitorial, security and station management. The Peshawar Development Authority was tasked with the project's civil infrastructure construction because of its experience in the construction of large projects and managing risks.

## Setting the vision: aiming for Gold Standard BRT

In evaluating their objectives for the project, the city of Peshawar wanted to ensure that this first-of-its-kind project was of the highest quality. These standards arose out of a desire to deliver the greatest economic benefits from the investment, to ensure success of this potentially risky new venture, and to elevate and showcase Peshawar as an urban leader in the region. ADB introduced the [BRT Standard](#) (and the associated target of a Gold Standard) as a tool to help deliver the set objectives and serve as the design basis for the project. The Standard lays out the essential elements for BRT, with the gold standard being the highest quality, highest performing, most efficient, and more inclusive version. The framing design elements, guided by the BRT Standard, include service planning, infrastructure and station design, communications and branding, and access and integration, which were all key to achieving success. While there was initial criticism of the system's design due to its expense and complexity, it has quickly grown to be viewed as a best practice, provoking curiosity for other cities in the region.

## Gender Action Plan (GAP)

A GAP is an integrated planning tool for ensuring a project includes gender equality measures. Based on detailed analyses that identify key gender inequalities and constraints that require improvement, GAP prioritizes actions and schedules the implementation of measures, including public awareness campaigns. It can be integrated into a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) or a public transport plan. ([TUMI](#))



## Centering inclusive design on the needs of all people

A key consideration in Zu Peshawar planning was ensuring the design process was influenced by and addressed the needs of those residents using the system, with a specific focus on women, transgender people and persons with disabilities. Project administrators undertook several modes of citizen engagement in the planning, implementation and operations phases. These included: surveys, workshops, consultations, public meetings and other forms of user feedback acquisition, such as through social media and mobile phone apps. The Gender Action Plan (GAP) has been the main instrument guiding the design and implementation phases, including the public input requirements; it is now used as a monitoring tool. Another key group that the city made sure to engage with and seek input and feedback from was the community of persons living with disabilities. The system developers worked closely with a local disability rights organization to ensure the quality and effectiveness of each intervention and to ensure the system was 100% universally accessible.

In the project's planning stages, a comprehensive study identified stakeholders and developed a stakeholder map as a means of contacting and maintaining relationships with these stakeholder groups. Such groups included public committees, local community groups, NGOs, academia, public

sector organizations, and more.

Route planning activities involved workshops and interaction with local residents, focus group discussions and interviews that looked at land availability and implementation priority. Similarly, both station and vehicle design incorporated feedback from workshops, women-only visits and social media to ensure safe and inclusive design for all as well as comfort, resilient landscaping and aesthetics. The project branding process with stakeholders added cultural aspects to the project brand name, which is easy to understand in other

A group of women are test riding design features of a prototype bus. Source: TransPeshawar.



Zu Peshawar system is universally accessible for all users. The vehicles provide safe space for passengers using wheelchairs (left), while stations feature ramps, level boarding, and convenient ticket booths (right). Source: TransPeshawar.



Implementation of Zu Peshawar has been guided by a Gender Action Plan that includes quotas and educational programming to increase safety and economic mobility for women in Peshawar. GAP components are incorporated as key performance indicators for contractors; these are reviewed monthly with each contractor's invoice. Continually and personally monitored by the CEO of TransPeshawar, the targets include:

- 1 Adverts, social media campaigns, announcements and signage that provide helpline numbers, educate passengers on their options for reporting harassment and public service announcements on respect for persons with disabilities.
- 2 Safe Travel Program to address issues of sexual harassment, theft and bullying, especially toward women and other vulnerable groups by working with advocate groups representing women and persons with disabilities, such as UN Women and Ombudsperson.
- 3 A quota designating at least 15% of the new commercial spaces in BRT stations and depots for women entrepreneurs.
- 4 A quota holding that at least 10% of TransPeshawar staff are women, including in the BRT operations and maintenance divisions (as compared to 0% female staff in previous transit operations). Contractors, including bus operators, fare collectors, and station management, have been given a target of 20% of staff being women; collectively the 10% minimum has been met.
- 5 Training on gender and social inclusion for Trans Peshawar and Authority staff, as well as training on handling harassment reports.

The Safe Travel Program addresses the needs of children and persons with disabilities through engagement, collaboration and knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is being done by involving groups like UN Women, Ombudsperson, which were established to protect women's rights as well as other civil society groups representing people with disabilities.

Zu Peshawar vehicles feature CCTV and women-only entrances and spaces to help improve the sense of personal safety and security for women. Source: TransPeshawar.



This helps inform programming and educational outreach in the stations and buses and ensures safe access for women and people with disabilities and helps inform training needs for the operators and staff of the system.

With this collaboration, knowledge centers with information educating women about their rights and the readily available government support have been established at several stations. Announcements are made in buses and at stations about helpline numbers and what to do if a woman should encounter any uncomfortable situation as well as pleas for the respect of anyone with a disability. The helpline is available for women to file complaints and there is a formal mechanism for addressing them. Over 1,000 complaints were filed by women and resolved through the helpline in the first year of operation. Videos are created and shared on social media to raise awareness about equitable travel. CCTV monitoring is also installed across the entire system, which helps to address issues of theft and harassment both for vulnerable groups and the vendors. This helped Zu Peshawar elevate the trust in the system and increase women's ridership.



Station staff are likewise trained to assist vulnerable people. Dedicated staff is assigned to ensure elevators and escalators are in operation and that station and approach lighting are functional for everyone's safety and that users feel safe using the system. Similarly, staff training is regularly done to provide the best customer support.

Additionally, the project solicited feedback from marginalized groups, who were brought onto demo buses; their feedback was incorporated into the final designs. These changes included extending the seat belt to provide more comfort to riders in wheelchairs, lowering the hand straps for women who are often shorter and changing the on-bus ramps to better suit wheelchairs.

## Relocating existing vendors and residents in the corridor

Though the project's construction principally took place in already existing corridors, some relocation or compensation of residents and commercial vendors did occur. This process followed the strict [Land Acquisition and Resettlement Policies](#) of ADB, with vendors that operated adjacent to the corridor given new and upgraded shop space in the accessways to stations. According to the [Social Monitoring Report Jan-Jun 2021](#), one of the challenges that the resettlement program faced results from an inability to compensate residents and vendors who are Afghan nationals, or those who are underaged. As there is no procedure via the Afghan Commissionerate to procure compensation through official legal channels, and since underaged and displaced persons do not have national identity cards or bank accounts, this issue is one to be resolved on the policy level.

## Safeguarding the livelihoods of the existing public transport operators

One key group of stakeholders that were incorporated into the project's planning process were the operators of the city's existing transit system. Before Zu Peshawar, the city's public transit relied on a decades-old informal patchwork of hundreds of vehicle operators driving everything from buses to Ford wagons. These operators worked in an unregulated and highly competitive environment that often led to overcrowding and congestion.

Planning phase of Zu Peshawar focused on identifying businesses adjacent to the BRT corridor which will be impacted by the construction of the new system. Source: TransPeshawar.



In response, Peshawar undertook a Bus Industry Restructuring Program (BIRP), a strategy that facilitates working with these operators to agree on a plan for restructuring the informal transit sector after the inauguration of BRT. The resulting agreement would be integral to achieving the city's emissions and pollution goals, as old vehicles have remained on the road despite aging or faulty parts and high emissions; there were likewise few mechanisms in the city for scrapping old vehicles.

This project began with a detailed analysis for the transition of the existing bus industry. It included the review of related activities around the world, focus group discussions and the proposal and implementation of solutions that both operators and the government would find acceptable.

First, the BIRP team surveyed operators to see if it would be possible to incorporate them into the operational activities of the new BRT system. The survey revealed that operators did not function as companies, vehicle associations were siloed from each other and not integrated, and few owners drive their own buses. Few understood the wider logistics of running a complex operation such as BRT.

BIRP then pursued a second option—scrapping buses, paying compensation, and providing employment to affected drivers. Initially, 650 vehicles have been identified for scrapping, with 350 vehicles already scrapped. A further 220 vehicles are planned for scrapping while some owners opted out of the program. These remaining vehicles will not run in parallel to the BRT. In 2019, TransPeshawar and the PK government committed PKR 670 million (\$3.5 million) to take these vehicles off the road. Owners were paid for the cost of the vehicle and provided monthly compensation for one year. They were also referred to different service providers for new employment, as per a contract agreement provision built into the contracts TransPeshawar holds with various operators.

*Ahmed sold his bus for double its market value and bought a new low-emissions vehicle carrier to ferry passengers between Peshawar and Rawalpindi, 180km away. He has since made enough money to pay off all his debts.*

The BIRP has not arrived without its struggles. The process included hundreds of individual operators using a variety of obsolete vehicles. Many owners were illiterate and their employees were driving without licenses and permits. The journey to identifying a solution suitable for all operators and staff, including the amount of compensation, presented a huge challenge to the process; the resulting agreement has helped operators receive compensation for their previous work while paving the way for a transit system that is safer, more equitable, more consistent, and more efficient. Moreover, BIRP showed what is possible with comprehensive, long-term relationships with key stakeholders.

## Innovating bus technology for greater sustainability

The project has introduced 244 diesel hybrid electric buses for the first time in Pakistan. This created a huge challenge, as diesel buses are generally favored in Pakistan due to the maintenance expertise and availability of parts. A high-level debate arose as to whether to bring on diesel and hybrid technologies, as they are new to both the country and the international market. However, through workshops and expert engagement, new hybrid technology buses were procured.

During the procurement process, Peshawar assumed the risks and adopted the innovation to break the status quo. Now other systems are following in the footsteps of Zu Peshawar, the most recent example being a BRT system in Karachi, Pakistan, which has procured similar buses. This technology means that typically 30–33% of the vehicle's propulsion is produced from electricity, either in the form of grid electricity or stored energy from regenerative braking. This technology is viewed as a stepping stone on a path to the eventual full electrification of the bus fleet. Diesel hybrid buses are highly fuel-efficient compared to previous technologies; buses run on more than 4 km per liter as compared to 1.75 km per liter. Considering a cumulative 40,000 km driving distance per day for the bus fleet, the environmental impacts of the new technology are huge.

New hybrid buses of Zu Peshawar. Source: TransPeshawar.





## 4. Urban Transformation

Peshawar's bikeshare includes 360 gender-inclusive bikes. Sources: TransPeshawar.



The planning phase of the project included city-level mobility, social inclusion, and NMT promotion objectives. These resulted in innovative interventions that complement and improve the Zu Peshawar system.

By rethinking the city's mobility options under the Zu Peshawar system, Peshawar has catalyzed walking and bicycling. The BRT main corridor has been built with dedicated bicycle lanes running alongside them, providing a safe infrastructure for bicycle usage. Every station also includes bicycle parking for people who reach the station using their own cycles. At the same time, the city is now home to the country's first bikeshare system, which currently has 32 stations serving 360 bicycles. The bikeshare, which uses both kiosks and the Zu Mobile App to provide real-time locations of bicycles, connects major educational buildings and residential areas to the BRT system along the main corridor. Already, according to TransPeshawar and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Government, it has been estimated that there was a 6% increase in cycling trips since the implementation of bikeshare. While this is phase 1 pilot of the bikeshare, phase 2 will see the system expand.

Every BRT station is integrated with bikeshare physically and with fare allowing seamless travel. Source: TransPeshawar.



Pedestrian safety has also gotten a lift, as the revamped BRT system also includes wide and universally accessible sidewalks and access to stations via escalators, elevators, stairs, ramps, and pedestrian bridges. A 4 km multi-use skyway is being constructed for pedestrians and cyclists in one of the most congested areas of the city.



The corridor was designed so that all major stations are about 800 meters apart, ensuring that any future redevelopment will be accessible to BRT within 400 meters of walking or less. Finally, as part of the reconstruction, the city invested in a better drainage system to address the extreme rains. This will reduce flooding that impedes pedestrian and cycling access.

The Peshawar BRT mainly passes through areas of the city that have already been developed. To encourage and promote transit-oriented development, investments have been made to create three major commercial centers directly integrated with the BRT stations.

Two of these commercial centers were developed through the redevelopment of low-rise single-family homes. In those centers, 15% of the vending space is allocated for women entrepreneurs.

Part of the goal of developing these commercial centers is to be able to have revenue coming in that can support the operations of the BRT. These and other areas along the main corridor of the system have been targeted for urban regeneration, including “facade-to-facade renewal,” and the addition of new footpaths. This

New sidewalks that complement the Zu Peshawar system were the first ever investment in pedestrian infrastructure in Pakistan.  
Source: TransPeshawar.



## 5. Lessons Learned and Looking Ahead

Thanks to the new BRT system, built to accommodate the needs of those who need it most, ridership among women increased to 20% as compared to just 2% who used public transport before BRT was implemented.



In the nearly two years since Zu Peshawar was first inaugurated, the general public has embraced the BRT system, with the system now accounting for 50% of all public transport trips; the public is now generally in favor of expanding the project in the city. Zu Peshawar is inspiring similar projects in other parts of the country. The project has reduced the stigma once associated with public transport and inspired greater perceptions that access to transport is not a luxury good but a common need for everyone. Greater expectations for safety, reliability, and rights for vulnerable groups in society have resulted, as women and people with disabilities have a new-found ability to move more independently around the city.

During project construction, the government and TransPeshawar faced strong criticism from opposition parties, existing bus operators, and private car users. Political champions and continuous engagement with stakeholders countered this. Engagement proved especially important, as civil society's participation supported the project, viewing it as a means for economic revival. Civil society also helped to address concerns raised by opposing stakeholders, including the informal transit operators.

The consultation process and compensation also helped win support from different parties. Opposition to the BRT system faded with strong public support; stakeholders across the board are now in strong support of the system. The planning, construction and operation of the BRT system have produced many lessons that are already being replicated by other government bodies and transport systems. Educational advertisements incited project support while guiding design principles focusing on the city's heritage were replicated by the city government for other projects.



The project's first phase is set for [completion](#) in June 2022. While the system is fully functional, the first phase still requires minor work on the main corridor as well as three plaza building projects at Hayatabad, Dabgari and Chamkani. These plazas will include commercial spaces integrated with the BRT stations and a percentage of businesses in these new commercial spaces are to be designated for female entrepreneurs. Planning for the project's second phase, which will include a trunk corridor and off-corridor route covering a nearly 50-km area, has begun. It will also expand the bikeshare system to the rest of the city.

Ridership has increased demand by 26 buses on top of the 220 originally contracted and the number of routes has increased beyond the original plan to grow service coverage.

New transportation infrastructure currently planned or being implemented in Pakistan has followed the Peshawar model. Karachi, for example, has planned a red line featuring bike share lanes and footpath developments and taken Peshawar's lead in incorporating green vehicles and mobile apps. Three other cities in KP province—Abbottabad, Mardan and Swat—are currently being studied for similar BRT projects. Peshawar's BRT project has changed the conversation and expectations in Pakistan regarding public transport and the effect of those changed conversations will produce new infrastructure and programs for years to come.

*"Peshawar has set a baseline in the country by adopting innovation and embracing risks, which no other mature system in Pakistan was ready to do. Now other systems are following us." — Fayyaz Khan, CEO of TransPeshawar.*

Peshawar's BRT system positively impacted the lives of many vulnerable groups in the city, including children and their families. Source: TransPeshawar.







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