

BRT system earns Dar es Salaam 2018 Sustainable Transit Award

By Mathew Kwembe

Dar es Salaam's new bus rapid transit system which was opened on the 16th May, 2016 has enabled the bustling city of Tanzania to win a major transportation prize.

According to Michael Kodransky, Chair of the Sustainable Transport Award Committee, Dar es Salaam has been selected as it has the potential to accelerate sustainable transport projects in booming Sub-Saharan Africa.

He added that the rapid transit project is transformative for the city of Dar es salaam; it offers a source of inspiration for other African cities, where new transport systems are being planned.

"We are thrilled to promote over the next year the great work that Dar es salaam has done and convene experts from all over the world to see first-hand what they have accomplished," said Kodransky.

Similar sentiments were echoed by Ms. Bella Bird, World Bank Country Director for Tanzania, Burundi, Malawi and Somalia.

"The first phase of the BRT is already proving to be transformational for Dar, both socially and economically," said Ms. Bird

This means that Dar es Salaam now becomes the first African city to win the Sustainable Transport Award.

As the winning city, Dar es Salaam will also host the world transportation experts for next year's Mobilize conference. Dar es Salaam a city of five million and a major economic hub in East Africa was awarded the prize because it has managed to launch a series of transformative improvements to transit, cycling and walking, the most important of which is the Dar es Salaam, Bus Rapid Transit system (DART).

Already the President of the United Republic of Tanzania his Excellency Dr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli hailed the city of Dar es salaam for this achievement.

The rapid transit system has reduced commute times by more than half for residents who previously faced upwards of four hours stuck in traffic every day.

DART is more than a public transit system, for it has brought improvements for pedestrians and cyclists as well.

The project includes cycle paths, sidewalks and improved pedestrian safety with well-designed at grade pedestrian crossings.

“These efforts have made it the first African city to win the prestigious Sustainable Transport Award in its 13-year history,” said the statement from ITDP.

The DART project is being implemented in six phases, and the first phase has a total of 21 km of trunk route. About 160,000 passengers per day use the BRT system using 140 buses.

“The BRT system is projected to carry an estimated 400,000 passengers per day by mid-next year when the first phase becomes fully operational with over 300 buses,” said the statement.

It further clarified that the project will cover the entire city with high quality BRT service, and the accompanying cycling and walking infrastructure.

The second phase of the project will be completed over the next year and it will be supported by African Development Bank and the planned third and fourth phases will be supported by the World Bank.

Other previous Sustainable Transportation award winning cities include Seoul, South Korea; Paris, France; Guangzhou, china; San Francisco, USA; Mexico City, Mexico and Yichang, China.