Public Transportation Facts

Public transportation transforms communities and the lives of the people living in them by spurring economic development, promoting sustainable lifestyles and providing a higher quality of life. Every segment of American society—individuals, families, communities, and businesses—benefits from public transportation.

Public transportation consists of a variety of modes:
- buses
- light rail
- subways
- commuter trains
- streetcars and trolleys
- van pool services
- ferries and water taxis
- monorails and tramways
- cable cars
- paratransit services for senior citizens and people with disabilities

QUICK FACTS

- In 2017, Americans took 10.1 billion trips on public transportation.
- 34 million times each weekday, people board public transportation.
- Since 1995, public transportation ridership has increased by 30%—a growth rate higher than the 22% increase in U.S. population.
- Public transportation is a $71 billion industry that employs more than 430,000 people.
- 6,800 organizations provide public transportation in the United States.
- 45% of Americans have no access to public transportation.
- Millennials consider public transportation as the best option for digital socializing and among the best for connecting with communities.

Get on Board for Economic Opportunities
Every $1 invested in public transportation generates $4 in economic returns.

Every $1 billion invested in public transportation supports and creates more than 50,000 jobs.

Every $10 million in capital investment in public transportation yields $30 million in increased business sales.

Every $10 million in operating investment yields $32 million in increased business sales.

70% of public funding for public transportation flows to the private sector, creating and supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Home values in areas located near high-frequency public transit performed 42% better than other areas.

Hotels in cities with direct rail access to airports raise 11% more revenue per room than hotels in those cities without.

Get on Board for a Safer Way to Travel

A person can reduce his or her chance of being in an accident by more than 90 percent simply by taking public transit as opposed to commuting by car.

Traveling by public transportation is 10 times safer per mile than traveling by automobile.

Get on Board for Saving Money

The average household spends 16 cents of every dollar on transportation, and 93% of this goes to buying, maintaining, and operating cars, the largest expenditure after housing.

A household can save nearly $10,000 by taking public transportation and living with one less car.

Get on Board to Reduce Gasoline Consumption

Public transportation’s overall effects save the United States 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline annually.

Get on Board for a Better Environment
• Communities that invest in public transit reduce the nation’s carbon emissions by 37 million metric tons annually.

Get on Board for Enhanced Personal Opportunities

• Public transportation provides personal mobility and freedom for people from every walk of life.

• Access to public transportation gives people transportation options to get to work, go to school, visit friends, or go to a doctor’s office.

• A total of 87% of trips on public transit have a direct impact on the local economy.

• Of all riders, 71% are employed and 7% are students.

• More than two-thirds of riders walk to their stop or station.