



AMERICAN
PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION
ASSOCIATION

Public Transportation: *Moving America Forward*



In This Report

Public transportation benefits all Americans—whether they use it or not.

Public transportation gets people to the places that are important to them—to jobs, to medical appointments, to educational opportunities, and more.

Public transportation is crucial to the economy. It creates and retains jobs. It revitalizes business districts and lets employers tap into a larger workforce. It stimulates commerce. And it increases property values.

Public transit use reduces our nation's dependence on foreign oil. It helps cut our carbon emissions. And it is critical to emergency response and homeland security.

Public transportation equals a stronger economy, a cleaner environment, and greater energy independence—which add up to a better quality of life.

**As America looks for solutions to today's challenges,
public transportation takes us there.**

Public Transportation: More Riders, More Demand

Public transportation in the 21st century is leading the way, as more Americans are discovering the benefits of traveling on buses, trains, subways, trolleys, and ferries.

- ▼ 35 million times each weekday, Americans take public transit.¹
- ▼ Americans take more than 10 billion trips per year on public transportation—15 times the number of trips they take on domestic airlines.^{2,3}
- ▼ In recent decades, public transportation ridership has increased faster than the U.S. population and the use of the nation's highways.



More than 7,700 providers of public and community transportation offer Americans freedom, opportunity, and the choice to travel by means other than a car.¹ Investments in our nation's public transportation infrastructure are paying off, with many communities—large and small—expanding and modernizing their systems.

The benefits of public transportation impact everyone, even those who may never board a train or bus. Furthermore, Americans understand the value of public transit—so much that people are willing to tax themselves, if needed, to expand public transportation services. In recent years, voters around the country have overwhelmingly passed local public transportation ballot measures.

And high-speed rail promises to help Americans advance even more. Corridors around the nation will support communities with new jobs, offer individuals an alternative to congestion and high gas prices, and help the nation move toward a greener, more secure future.

Public transportation is critical to our nation's transportation system and essential to the economic and social quality of life of our citizens.



Benefits of Public Transportation: Helps Build a Strong Economy

Transportation is the backbone of a strong economy. Investments in public transportation generate significant economic benefits.

Creates and Sustains Employment

Public transportation is good for American workers and their companies. Every \$1 billion of investment in the nation's transportation infrastructure supports 36,000 jobs.⁴ These include durable and non-durable manufacturing jobs, as well as jobs in other industries, such as construction, finance, insurance and real estate, retail and wholesale trade, and services. Sixty-seven percent of the jobs directly supported by capital investment in the public transit industry replace lost blue-collar jobs with "green" jobs.⁵

Public transportation also moves people to and from their jobs. Businesses near public transportation have better employee reliability and less absenteeism and turnover. They have a larger labor pool, and their employees are less stressed because they are not driving on congested roadways.

Stimulates Commerce

The 36,000 jobs supported and created by every \$1 billion of investment in public transportation result in roughly \$3.6 billion in business sales and generate nearly \$500 million in federal, state, and local tax revenues.⁴ Overall, every \$1 invested in public transportation generates \$4 in economic activity.

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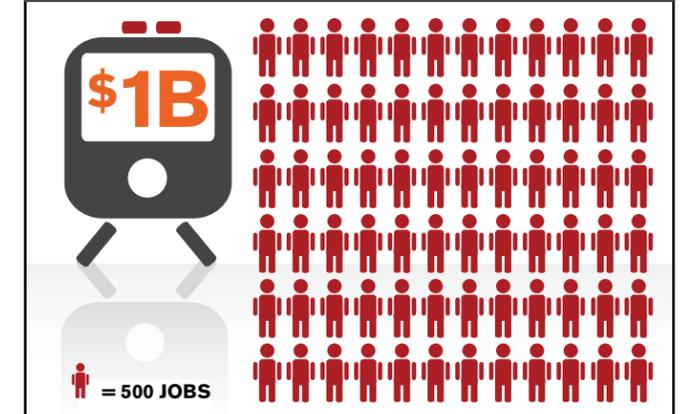
Enhances Personal Economic Opportunity; Saves Individuals Money

Public transportation use lowers household expenses and frees income for other needs. Automobile expenses are considerable. For example:

- ▼ For every dollar earned, the average household spends 18 cents on transportation, 94 percent of which is for buying, maintaining and operating cars.⁶
- ▼ Household transportation costs are higher in areas with sprawl and few transportation services. Americans living in areas served by public transportation save more than \$13 billion in congestion costs annually.⁷



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- ▼ Public transit riders save approximately \$1,400 in gas per year. In addition, transit availability can reduce the need for an additional car, a yearly expense of more than \$9,000 in an average household budget.^{8,9}

Connects Workers to Jobs in Suburban and Rural Areas

Suburban residents who ride public transportation are often headed for work. Due to increased rider demand, transit lines extend to outlying suburban communities, and bus shuttles carry workers from rail lines to employer destinations. For employees with limited mobility options, public transit is a key link to suburban-based jobs. Public assistance agencies also use public transportation to help more people enter the workforce. The Federal Transit Administration's Job Access and Reverse Commute Program provides grants to support transportation for thousands of Americans heading to their first jobs.



Benefits of Public Transportation: *Reduces Dependence on Foreign Oil*

With public support for expanded public transportation services, the public transit industry will be able to make an even larger contribution to helping our nation become energy independent.

This “leverage effect” of public transportation, supporting efficient land use patterns, saves 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline annually—more than three times the amount of gasoline refined from the oil we import from Kuwait.^{10,11}

People living in households within one-quarter mile of rail and one-tenth of a mile from a bus stop drive 4,400 fewer miles annually than persons in households with no access to public transit.¹²

Energy conservation is a national priority. More and more people are discovering that public transportation can offer significant energy savings. As an inherently energy-efficient travel mode that uses an average of one-half the oil consumed by the typical automobile user, public transportation is already leading the way. Just by taking public transportation, people can help reduce our country’s dependence on foreign oil.

By taking public transportation, people can help reduce our country’s dependence on expensive foreign oil.

Public transportation in the U.S. saves:¹⁰

- ▼ 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline, representing 11.5 million gallons of gasoline per day.
- ▼ The equivalent of 102 supertankers of oil, or a supertanker leaving the Middle East every 4 days.
- ▼ The equivalent of 420,000 fewer service station tanker trucks clogging our streets each year.
- ▼ The equivalent of 900,000 fewer automobile fill-ups each day.



Benefits of Public Transportation: *Cuts Air Pollution and Carbon Emissions*

Public transportation is the responsible environmental choice.

- ▼ U.S. greenhouse gases from transportation represent 28 percent of total U.S. emissions.¹³
- ▼ From 1996 to 2006, growth in U.S. transportation greenhouse gas emissions represented almost one half (47 percent) of the increase in total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁴
- ▼ Public transportation saves 37 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually—equivalent to the emissions resulting from the electricity generated for the use of 4.9 million households, or every household in Washington, DC; New York City; Atlanta; Denver; and Los Angeles combined.¹⁰
- ▼ If an individual switches a 20-mile roundtrip commute to public transportation, his or her annual CO₂ emissions will decrease by 4,800 pounds per year, equal to a 10 percent reduction in a two-car household’s carbon footprint.¹⁴
- ▼ Public transportation offers an immediate alternative for individuals seeking to reduce their energy use and carbon footprints. Taking public transportation far exceeds the combined benefits of using energy-efficient light bulbs, adjusting thermostats, weatherizing one’s home, and replacing a refrigerator.¹⁴

- ▼ Expanded public transit strategies coordinated with combining travel activity, land use development, and operational efficiencies can reduce greenhouse gases by 24 percent. The annual savings in vehicle costs to consumers will exceed the cost of enacting these strategies by as much as \$112 billion.¹⁵

Public transportation agencies are reducing their carbon footprint.

- ▼ Public transportation systems are investing in environmentally friendly vehicles such as hybrid buses.¹⁶
- ▼ Transit systems have also made innovative investments to install solar technology and construct facilities that meet new energy-efficient standards, including the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards.
- ▼ High-speed rail will help public transit systems and riders reduce the nation’s carbon footprint even more, as a greener alternative for longer trips.

Benefits of Public Transportation: Relieves Traffic Congestion

Mobility has always been an important part of the American lifestyle. But as more and more vehicles crowd the nation's roadways, traffic congestion is costing Americans time and money. According to the most recent Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) report on congestion in 439 urban areas of the U.S., congestion caused 4.16 billion hours of travel delay and 2.81 billion gallons of wasted fuel in 2007.⁷ The study found that the average annual delay per traveler climbed from 14 hours in 1982 to 36 hours in 2007.

Reduces Congestion and Travel Time, Protects Mobility
Public transportation's role in reducing traffic congestion is significant. Without public transportation, travel delays would have increased by 15 percent.⁷ The TTI report stated that public transportation services in America's most congested cities saved travelers \$13.7 billion and 646 million hours of added travel time.⁷

The TTI report analyzed the impact of public transportation in 439 metropolitan areas, categorized as very large, large, medium and small.

- ▼ Very large areas (3+ million): Public transportation saved 557 million hours of delay and \$11.9 billion in congestion costs.
- ▼ Large areas (1-3 million): 59 million hours of delay and \$1.2 billion saved.
- ▼ Medium urban areas (500,000-1 million): 13 million hours and \$259 million saved.
- ▼ Small areas (less than 500,000): Public transportation saved 2 million hours of delay and \$31 million.

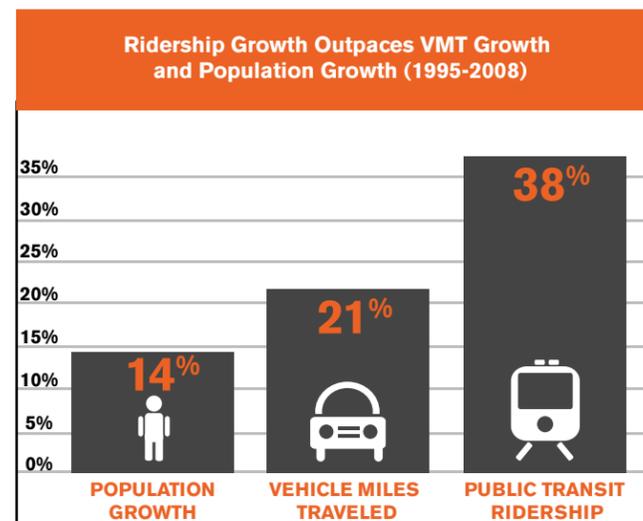
As public transportation use grows, savings will increase. Throughout the country, state-of-the-art public transportation systems are reducing travel times, on every mode of travel, for the Americans who use public transit more than 35 million times each workday.¹

- ▼ Using public transportation, a passenger can travel the 10 miles from Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport to downtown in just 15 minutes.¹⁷
- ▼ Dallas Area Rapid Transit rail expansions will increase the number of riders at the peak hour and direction from 3,300 in 2005 to 8,000 in 2030.¹⁸
- ▼ In New York City, the Lincoln Tunnel exclusive bus lanes accommodate 1,700 buses and 62,000 passengers a day, saving passengers 15-20 minutes in the morning rush hour compared with regular traffic.¹⁹

And the nation's coming launch of high-speed rail will do even more to help people get where they want to go faster and more easily.

An Important Alternative to Rising Gas Prices

The fact that public transportation helps people stay mobile was never more strikingly apparent than when gas prices spiked to new highs at the pump. Transit agencies across the country reported record ridership increases as more people chose public transit over cars. When prices ebbed, many individuals continued to ride public transit. Riders who focused on saving fuel discovered other benefits of taking public transportation, such as avoiding traffic jams and reading or relaxing while traveling.



Benefits of Public Transportation: Provides Critical Support During Emergencies

Time and again, the availability of public transportation during emergencies—both natural and man-made—has been critical in maintaining basic access, mobility, and safety for individuals. In an emergency, people who have never used public transit discover that public transportation can literally mean a matter of life or death.

Terrorism Response

In major evacuations of urban areas, only public transportation has the capacity to move millions of people quickly and to give critical support to first responders by delivering emergency equipment and transporting emergency response personnel. The 9/11 response illustrates public transit's crucial role during times of emergency²⁰:

- ▼ In Washington, DC, New York City, and Shanksville, PA, public transit shuttled police, fire and construction workers to emergency sites.
- ▼ In Chicago, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, and many other communities, public transit provided safe routes out of downtowns, where buildings were evacuated and businesses were closed.
- ▼ Transit agencies in Little Rock, Portland, OR, Denver, and Kansas City, MO, took stranded airline passengers to hotels and special shelters.



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Natural or Man-Made Disasters, Earthquake Response

Public transportation is an important back-up alternative for moving people quickly during a disaster or emergency²¹:



- ▼ The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District helped following a 2008 explosion that caused part of a freeway to collapse near the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. BART responded by

operating longer trains and adding more frequent service. The resulting ridership was the highest in the system's history: 375,200, 10 percent above the typical weekday average.

- ▼ Across the nation, buses are used as heated or air-conditioned shelters and treatment centers for emergency workers at the sites of fires or hazardous materials incidents.
- ▼ In Pittsburgh, the Port Authority of Allegheny County provided a bus on several occasions to local firefighters who needed a place to stay warm while on the scene of a fire in frigid temperatures. In one case, when the temperature was in the low teens, an operator stayed two hours beyond his regular shift to keep a warm bus running at the scene of an apartment fire.
- ▼ Transit systems in hurricane-prone states provide critical evacuation during hurricanes and flooding.



Public transportation offers mobility for residents of rural America, particularly people without cars. In 2008, residents of small urban areas and rural areas made 621 million trips on public transit. However, access to public transportation in these areas needs to be greatly expanded.

Benefits of Public Transportation: Offers Mobility for People in Small Urban and Rural Areas

Public transportation offers mobility for residents of rural America, particularly people without cars. In 2008, residents of small urban areas and rural areas made 621 million trips on public transit.¹ However, access to public transportation in these areas needs to be greatly expanded.

Two-thirds of rural Americans—60 million people—have inadequate access to public transportation.²² They live in counties that have either no service or so little service that they can only be characterized as isolated.

Provides Access for Isolated Residents

For the third of Americans in rural areas who do have access to public transportation, public transit systems offer better access to employment, education, health care, social services, shopping, entertainment, and friends/relatives. If these transit systems no longer existed, people who use them would have to find alternative transportation or discontinue some activities.

- ▼ RIDES (Rural Initiative Development of Effective Services) Mass Transit District, the transportation provider for 11 southeastern Illinois counties, coordinates transportation needs for clients of 80 agencies to meet job, service, and training needs.²³
- ▼ In the Robertsdale, AL, region, the Baldwin Rural Area Transit System provides more than 400,000 trips per year.²⁴

Spurs the Economy

Public transportation enhances local rural economic growth in many ways, increasing the local customer base for a range of services—shopping malls, medical facilities, and other services.

- ▼ In South Carolina, the 43 member agencies of the Chesterfield County Coordinating Council share vehicles on fixed route and dial-a-ride services and allow adults to ride school buses.²⁵
- ▼ In Lebanon, NH, 65 percent of the riders on Advance Transit services are commuters going to work.²⁶



Benefits of Public Transportation: Provides Access for People of All Ages

Public transportation is critical for a growing number of people at various stages of life.

Connects to Educational Facilities

Approximately 11 percent of public transportation users are en route to schools; school districts, colleges, universities, educators, and parents rely on expanded public transportation services.²⁷ Unlimited access transit pass programs at many universities throughout the country provide system-wide service to students, faculty and staff. These programs reduce auto-related expenditures and save universities millions of dollars.

- ▼ Salt Lake City's University TRAX LRT line serves more than 45,000 students and faculty, relieving campus congestion and reducing university parking costs.²⁸
- ▼ In Austin, TX, Capital Metro Transit provides free transportation for the 66,500 students, faculty, and staff affiliated with the University of Texas—dramatically reducing the university's carbon footprint.^{29,30}
- ▼ Students at high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools around the nation rely on public transit to get to school.

Many other public transportation agencies and educational institutions—in areas such as Syracuse and Albany, NY; Madison, WI; Fargo, ND; Pittsburgh; Seattle; and Chicago—have established successful cost-saving partnerships.

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Provides Older Americans with Independence

Largely because of limited transportation options, more than half of all non-drivers age 65 and older stay at home on a typical day. Compared with older drivers, older nondrivers in the U.S. make 15 percent fewer trips to the doctor, 59 percent fewer shopping trips and visits to restaurants, and 65 percent fewer trips for social, family, and religious activities. For many non-drivers, public transportation is the only alternative to asking for a ride for trips outside their immediate neighborhoods.³¹

By 2025, an estimated 20 percent of the population—one in five persons—will be over age 65; providing mobility options is critical for older Americans and for those who care for them.³¹ It is imperative that our transportation system find new ways to meet the needs of citizens who are unable to drive or who



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want other mobility options, so that they are better able to participate in the community and the economy.

According to a national survey of individuals age 65 or older, conducted by Harris Interactive, more than four in five seniors believe public transportation is a better alternative to driving alone, especially at night, and 83 percent agree that public transit provides easy access to the things that older adults need in everyday life.³²

At the 2005 White House Conference on Aging, ensuring that older Americans have transportation options to retain their mobility and independence received the third most votes of 73 issues considered, with 1,002 ballots out of a maximum of 1,200.³³

Virtually every transit system provides services for older Americans. Some programs and advanced technologies designed for them include:

- ▼ Outreach and education programs and rider reward programs; some systems offer personalized sessions on how to use the bus and policies that allow bus drivers to deviate from routes to get as close as possible to requested stops.
- ▼ Easy-to-use, easy-to-access equipment such as speaking signs and vehicles.
- ▼ “Kneeling” hydraulic buses that lower when passengers board the bus.
- ▼ Passenger information and real-time technology and smart cards.



Benefits of Public Transportation: Increases Real Estate Values and Development

Residents and community leaders across the nation are recognizing that high-capacity, regional public transportation services are essential to grow America’s communities in a way that enhances and promotes real estate development. In addition, communities that invest in public transportation attract more visitors and shoppers, public events, commercial businesses, and employers, realizing enhanced development and high economic returns.

Communities around the nation are encouraging residential and commercial development near public transit. Transit-oriented development is mixed-use residential and commercial development that brings housing, shopping, educational institutions, and working opportunities within walking distance (usually defined as 1/4 to 1/2 mile) of a transportation hub.

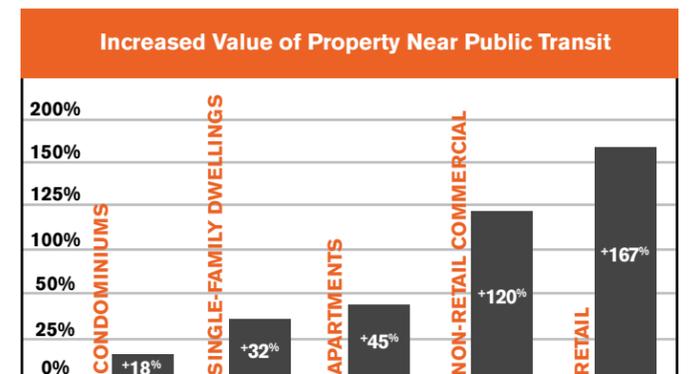
- ▼ In Arlington, VA, development in two Metrorail corridors is concentrated on 6 percent of the land in the county but produces almost half the county’s tax revenue.³⁴
- ▼ The city of Dallas had \$3 billion in transit-oriented development (TOD) projects in 2005. By 2008, it was \$7 billion—associated with an additional \$78 billion in tax revenues.³⁵
- ▼ In Charlotte, NC, there is \$1.8 billion in projected TOD investment, expected to produce an additional \$24.1 million annually in tax revenue.³⁶
- ▼ In San Diego, TOD has meant that retail property values have increased 167% within 200 feet of the trolley station.³⁷
- ▼ Metro in Los Angeles has a very successful joint program representing more than \$4 billion in local development investment.³⁸

Boosts Real Estate Values

Real estate—residential, commercial or business—that is served by public transportation is valued more highly by the public than similar properties not as well served by transit.

A University of North Texas study found that the total value of projects that are attributable to the Dallas Area Rapid Transit light rail system from 1999 through 2007 is \$4.26 billion. Area school districts will potentially receive \$46 million annually from increased taxable property values.³⁵

A 2008 Center for Transit-Oriented Development survey of previous research studies found that a property value premium for single-family residential property near public transit was as high as 32 percent, for condominiums near transit as high as 18 percent, for rental apartments near transit as high as 45 percent, for commercial property near transit as high as 120 percent, and for retail property near transit as high as 167 percent.³⁷





Public transportation connects people with life's essential services.

Benefits of Public Transportation: Improves Public Health, Delivers Essential Health and Human Services

Increased investment in and use of public transportation can directly improve and protect the health of all Americans.

Our car-centered transportation system has led to pollution and poor air quality. Emissions from road vehicles are the largest contributors to smog.

Air pollution from vehicles has been directly linked to a variety of health problems and reductions in air pollution have been associated with greater longevity.³⁹

America's public transportation systems can play a vital role in creating a healthier nation. Providing significant environmental benefits—by reducing smog-producing pollutants, greenhouse gases, and runoff from paved surfaces that degrade the water supply, and by conserving ecologically sensitive lands and open spaces—public transportation is helping to meet national air quality standards. Increased use of public transportation could have an even greater impact in the future.

In addition to reduced pollution, direct health benefits of public transportation include:

- ▼ **Lower rates of respiratory and heart disease.** The health effects of mobile source pollution can be severe and even life-threatening, particularly to children, older adults, and adults with respiratory illnesses. Many groups

are at greater risk because of chronic lung or cardiovascular disease, including people with diabetes, whose cardiovascular systems are threatened by particle pollution.

- ▼ **Lower accident rates.** The national statistics show that a person is many times safer traveling on public transit than in an automobile.
- ▼ **Quality of life.** Public transportation fosters a more active lifestyle, encouraging people to walk and bike to transit stops. Walking to public transit maintains personal activity needed for good health. The median daily walking time of a transit user is 19 minutes, and 29 percent of all transit users reach the recommended minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity solely by walking to transit.⁴⁰

A study of auto and rail commuters from New Jersey to New York City found that the "auto commuter showed significantly higher levels of reported stress, had more negative mood, indicated the trip required significantly more effort, and found their trip significantly less predictable than did train commuters."⁴¹

Transportation is an integral part of health or social services programs. Operators of these programs rely on public transit to reach the intended target groups, and to ensure access and opportunity for all Americans. Public transit connects people with life's essential services.

Through advanced technology, communities across the country are providing residents with improved coordination of services and trip scheduling, which facilitates medical trips or other similar trips.

Provides Important Options for Health Care Delivery

The availability of public transportation can shrink duplication in transportation services. This helps agencies provide an option to the costly use of ambulance and EMS services, and helps relieve other public agencies of transportation responsibility—thereby increasing productivity.

- ▼ Brokered transit systems utilizing advanced technologies include Reach Your Destination Easily Transit in rural Buffalo County, NE. The state's first brokered transit system has extended operating hours, abolished waiting time requirements, and extended transportation access—saving Buffalo County \$400,000 compared with the cost of the same number of trips provided at the pre-coordination costs.⁴²

A Vital Link for Citizens with Disabilities

Public transportation systems provide a vital link to the more than 54 million Americans with disabilities.⁴³ The nation's transit systems have implemented services to ensure that persons with disabilities can remain actively involved in their communities, maintain effective roles in the economy, and have access to the full range of facilities and services needed to lead enjoyable and productive lives.

Reduces Medicaid Costs

Where public transportation is available, Americans eligible for Medicaid make regular use of it, adding up to huge savings for taxpayers.

- ▼ Under its Medical Transportation Program (MTP) in Portland, OR, TriMet became the single point of access for non-emergency transportation for Medicaid program participants in the agency's three-county service area. Through MTP, Medicaid non-emergency trips on transit are now made more often. The state of Oregon estimated that total savings from this program were more than \$2.6 million in 2001-02 and 2002-03.⁴²

- ▼ In Florida, Miami-Dade Transit's "bus pass" approach to moving about 1 percent of the region's Medicaid clients to less expensive fixed route trips from more expensive paratransit trips saved the Medicaid program more than \$9,285,000 per year.⁴²





Public transportation helps everyone—commuters, families, students, senior citizens, persons with disabilities—live the American dream.

Public Transportation: *Diverse, Expansive, Forward Looking*

Public transportation offers a variety of modes of travel, such as:

- ▼ Road vehicles: bus, trolleybus, vanpool, paratransit service.
- ▼ Rail and other fixed guideways: heavy rail, light rail, streetcars, commuter rail, automated guideway transit, inclined plane, cable car, monorail, aerial tramway—with high-speed rail in the coming years.
- ▼ Water: passenger-only and vehicle ferries, water taxis.

Many transit systems operate more than one mode of service. Roughly 1,200 agencies provide bus service, 82 provide rail service, 7,300 provide paratransit services, and 131 provide services on other modes.¹

Through the development and deployment of 21st century technologies, today's riders are finding that public transportation is a far cry from the transit systems of yesteryear. Buses and trains are easy to access and with stops announced to riders. New information technologies alert passengers by e-mail or RSS feed when the next bus or train is coming. People plan their trips on transit agency web sites. Many commuter buses and trains now have wi-fi capabilities—becoming rolling Internet cafes.

Public transportation helps everyone—commuters, families, students, senior citizens, persons with disabilities—live the American dream, as they seek to fulfill their personal and career goals, meet their daily needs, and maintain transportation independence. Now, more than ever, vital, strong public transportation systems are essential in this country.



Moving Into the Future

Public transportation is critical to the nation's future. It is a crucial part of a stronger economy. Public transportation stimulates commerce and creates and supports green jobs. It saves families money and increases sales for businesses. Public transit is an instrumental part of America's journey to energy independence. It reduces dependence on foreign oil and helps ensure mobility for all Americans. And the benefits public transportation brings to reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality make it the responsible and sustainable environmental choice.

As America grows, ever-present challenges create new opportunities. The nation is on track to build high-speed rail around the nation—creating millions of new jobs, saving millions of dollars, millions of barrels of foreign oil, and millions of pounds of greenhouse gas emissions.

Economy, energy, environment, and a better quality of life: Public transportation takes us there.



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For more information, contact:

American Public Transportation Association

1666 K Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20006-1215

Phone: 202-496-4800

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