

5 Major Reasons Public Transportation is Worth the Investment

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Public transportation is a crucial staple in our society. Those who own a vehicle might not always recognize the importance that lies within public transit systems. However, public transportation supports our economy and the people of Wisconsin.

1. Public transportation has a strong return on investment and stimulates the economy.

Especially in comparison to other transportation priorities (i.e. highway projects), transit is a phenomenal economic stimulator. [Researchers at WisDOT have also found that in the state of Wisconsin, transit has the potential to triple the return on investment if utilized properly. The American Public Transportation Association \(APTA\) finds that higher investment in public transportation leads to a \\$3.7 billion growth in GDP over a 20-year period.](#) The same study also outlines the tendency for public transportation connectivity to stimulate local economies and businesses, often indirectly leading to job creation. Additionally, reliance on transit has been estimated by the APTA to save riders \$845 annually; this number increases to over \$10,000 annually for automobile owners. Seems like a no brainer, right?

2. Public transportation connects people to otherwise unreachable job opportunities.

For many people, a barrier to success is location. Jobs are often too far away to feasibly approach, making it difficult to support a family or even themselves. Higher connectivity to different areas through public transportation relieves this issue on a grand scale, [as shown by passenger surveys on public transportation.](#)

The APTA highlights that more public transportation widens and diversifies the market of the area it is servicing, as well as its customer base – this is done via a diminished priority for people to spend their money on private transportation options. A 2007 study by the APTA showed that without public transportation, riders chose not to make a trip 21% of the time – this collection of people withholds much untapped potential for local economies and job creation. More public transportation also means more jobs for those within the system, like system operators and drivers.

3. Public transportation provides support for people with disabilities.

There are many people that are unable to operate a motor vehicle due to a disability. Providing transportation solutions that benefit all people, regardless of ability, should be a priority of our society. The option to take public transit can completely change lives and make connections that wouldn't otherwise exist.

4. Public transportation systems are environmentally sound.

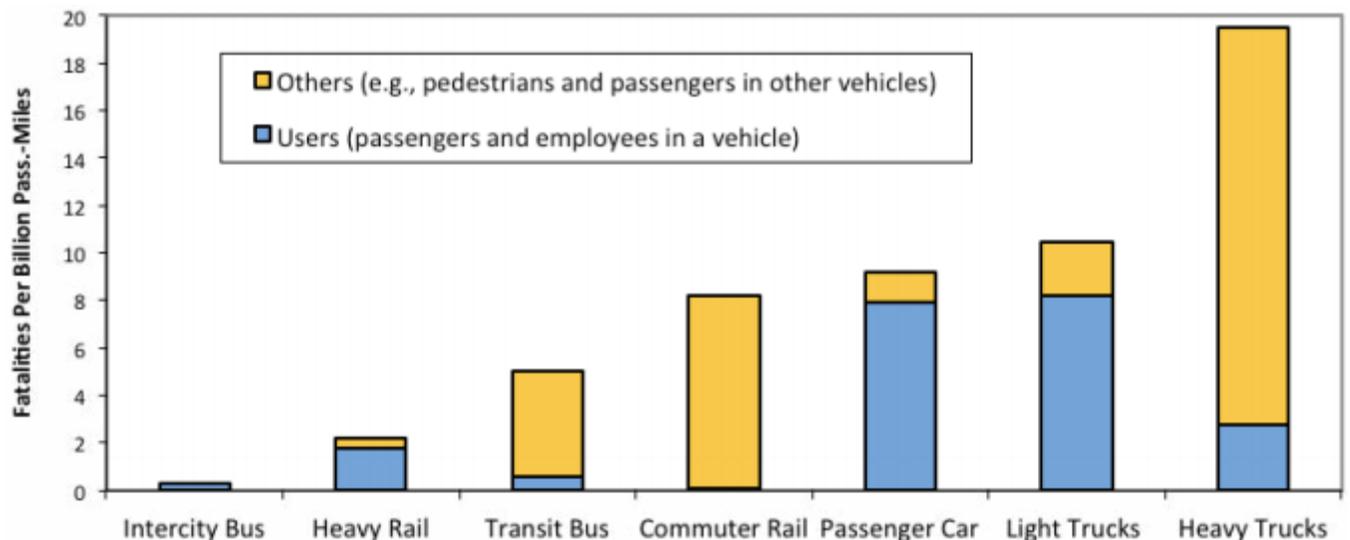
More people using public transportation means less emissions per person. Many public transit systems provide energy efficient alternatives to personal vehicles, and studies have shown that biking and walking are deeply connected to transit. [In fact, 90% of public transit riders must walk a short distance to board, and many bicyclists use transit to begin or finish their trips.](#) Transit, bike and pedestrian infrastructure are all important components to getting people out of their cars.

Transit systems also often support public policies concerning energy use, air quality and carbon emissions, and many bus systems are transitioning to hybrid or electric buses. With the transportation sector now producing more greenhouse gases than the electric sector, it is becoming more important than ever to find more sustainable transportation solutions.

5. Public transportation gets people places safe and effectively.

What might be the most obvious reason to vouch for public transportation is often overlooked due to its simplicity. Public transportation, by its very nature, exists to safely connect people to the places they'd like to go.

FIGURE 1. Transport fatalities



Source: Litman and Fitzroy 2012, based on FHWA and APTA data

This graph, produced by the Journal of Public Transportation, effectively spells out the safety of public transportation options in comparison to other personalized forms. Bus and rail systems are statistically safer modes on average – especially intercity buses and heavy rail systems.

Transportation is a necessity for Wisconsinites, and public transit provides many benefits. It connects people, stimulates the economy and aids Wisconsin residents in a multitude of ways.

As our Legislators continue to debate the transportation budget, contact them and tell them to make the smart choice!

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