



WHY TRANSIT MATTERS

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Hate sitting in traffic? You want public transit

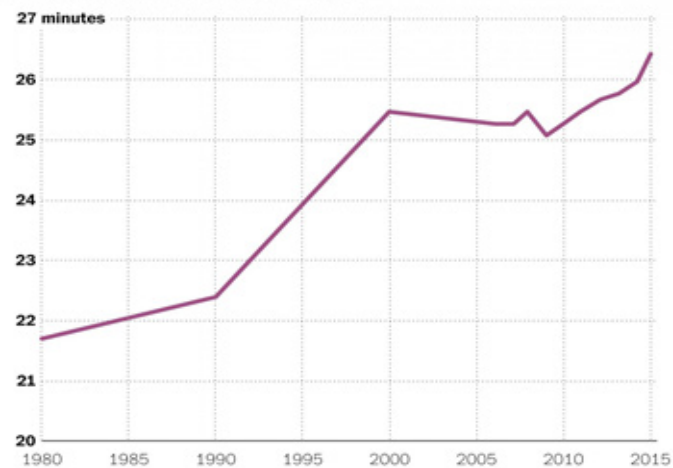
Over 100 million Americans drive alone to work each day while just seven million use public transit. It's no wonder that the average one-way commute takes almost 27 minutes.¹ American roadways are some of the most congested, having 5 of the 10 most congested cities in the world, and where 1 in 4 trips experience severe or extreme delays. Congestion is only increasing and leads to wasted time and resources, as well as poor health outcomes.

The yearly cost of congestion:^{1,2,3,4}

- 6.9 billion hours extra travel time
- 3.1 billion gallons of wasted fuel
- \$160 billion in fuel and time wasted
- \$1200 in fuel and time wasted per person
- Higher blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and rates of obesity.

The American commute keeps getting longer

Average travel time to work, 1980 - 2015



WAPD.ST/WONKBLOG

Source: US Census



Bus



Private Car



Uber/Lyft Car

Research shows that approximately 30,000 passengers can be carried on a single U.S. subway line in one hour – the equivalent of adding 10 additional highway lanes. Public transportation has the potential to drastically reduce congestion and mitigate some of the issues that it creates.

By relieving traffic congestion, public mass transit...

1. Increases work productivity

According to the 2015 Urban Mobility Scorecard, "Congestion is becoming a bigger problem outside of rush hour, with about 40 percent of the delay occurring in the mid-day and overnight hours, creating an increasingly serious problem for businesses that rely on efficient production and deliveries." Mass transit, however, speeds commerce and reduces daytime congestion. Expanded mass transit decreases congestion and provides businesses with increased access to broader markets, and workers with more diverse skills.

2. Increases economic output

Congestion reduces the overall economic health of a community. Traffic delays make people late to work, and lead to a loss of business.

One study shows that an increase in bus or rail seats per capita resulted in a 19% increase in city employment density. Increased employment density had a significant positive relationship to wages per worker. The study estimates that a 10% increase in bus/rail seats or rail service per capita results in \$45 million average annual wage increases with some larger cities seeing as much as \$1.8 billion increases.²

Public transit creates savings in time, and travel and vehicle ownership costs that lead to a shift in consumer spending. For every \$1 invested in public transportation, \$4 in economic returns are generated.⁵

3. Creates fewer delays and lower fuel costs

An additional 600 million hours and 700 million gallons of fuel were consumed in 2014 than in 2009. Studies show that “getting more productivity out of existing public transportation systems is vital to reducing congestion and improving travel time reliability.”¹

4. Reduces CO₂ emissions

Traffic congestion increases CO₂ emissions that poison our air and water, and ruin our health. Public mass transit lowers pollution, and reduces the cost of cleaning up the environment. By reducing traffic congestion, public mass transit contributes to both the physical and economic health of the public. Increased public transit investment is one of the surest ways of improving our quality of life by reducing the impact of emissions from transportation.

Sources

1. 2015 Annual Urban Mobility Report, Texas A&M University Transportation Institute, August 2015.
2. Increasing public transport provision in metropolitan areas can be of great benefit for wages and employment density, LSE US Centre.
3. Traffic Jams Cost U.S. Drivers \$1,200 a Year: Study, Reuters: U.S. News, February 20, 2017.
4. The American commute is worse today than it's ever been, The Washington Post, February 22, 2017.
5. Economic Impact of Public Transportation Investment, Weisbrod and Reno, prepared for American Public Transportation Association (APTA), May 2014.