



WHY TRANSIT MATTERS

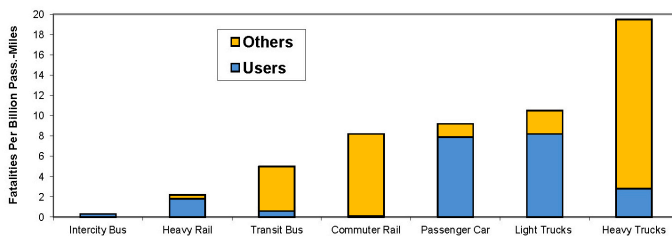
SAFETY AND SECURITY

If you want to travel safely – ride public transit

Public transit is the safest way to travel and it helps to reduce crime too. Studies show that traveling on public transit is safer than driving an automobile, truck, SUV or any personal motor vehicle.

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), taking the bus is 170 times safer than riding in a car. In fact Federal Transit Administration data show that public transit is among the safest ways to travel. From 2003 to 2008 transit bus travel resulted in 0.05 deaths per 100 million passenger miles, compared to 1.42 deaths for motor vehicles.¹

Fatalities per mile²



Transit tends to have lower crash rates than automobile travel, even taking into account risks to other road users.

Epidemic of car fatalities

The NSC estimates that approximately 35,200 motor vehicle fatalities occurred in 2013. It's the leading cause of death for people age 5-34.⁴ However bus accidents were responsible for just 0.1% of the total transportation fatalities in 2013.

In addition to devastating human loss, car crashes present a significant national cost in lost wages and productivity, medical expenses, administrative expenses, employer costs and property damage. The estimated cost of motor vehicle deaths, injuries and property damage in 2013 was \$267.5 billion.²

Any disease that took that many lives and cost that much money would be considered a national emergency, and the resources of the entire country would be rallied to end the epidemic.

Ways that transit increases safety, security and health⁵

- ✓ Shifts from automobile to transit. Transit passengers have about a tenth the crash injury or death rate as automobile occupants.
- ✓ Leverages reduced automobile travel. High quality public transit and transit-oriented development tend to leverage overall reductions in per capita vehicle ownership and travel by creating communities where residents own fewer automobiles, travel shorter distances, and rely more on walking, bicycling and transit.
- ✓ Since most transit trips include walking and cycling links, transit tends to increase public fitness and health.
- ✓ Increased transit use tends to increase natural surveillance – there are more passengers who watch out for each other - reducing crime risk to all users.
- ✓ Transit travel and transit-oriented development tend to increase community surveillance and cohesion (positive interactions between neighbors) that tends to increase safety and security.
- ✓ Transit service improvements can reduce the causes of crime by improving disadvantaged people's education and employment opportunities.
- ✓ Targeted transit safety and security programs can reduce safety and security risks.

Transit safety high

On average, there were approximately 40 public transit fatalities per year, from 1975 - 2010. The fatality rate per billion passenger-miles for buses during the same period is relatively low, 0.11.³

Your chances of getting killed or hurt travelling decrease significantly when you choose public transportation to get to work, the doctor, shopping or anywhere. Residents of transit-oriented communities are 80 percent less likely to suffer a traffic fatality than residents of automobile-oriented communities.⁶

transit ridership increases in a city, both violent and property crime rates tend to decline, and smart growth (more compact, mixed, walkable, transit-oriented development) tends to reduce crime risk.⁵

Transit is indeed the safest way to travel. The more people use it, the less senseless death and destruction we'll endure in the future.

Public transit reduces crime

Studies show that crime rates tend to decline in cities and communities with increased transit developments,² and transit improvements can reduce total crime risks. Data show that as

How improving transport options and smart growth can reduce urban crime⁶

| Crime Risk Factor | Impacts of Improved Transport Options and Smart Growth |
|--|---|
| Poverty concentration | Mixed development encourages wealthy and poor residents to locate close together, which improves poor people's economic opportunities. |
| Natural surveillance and community cohesion | More businesses, residents and responsible (non-criminal) by-passers provide "eyes on the street" and helps build local social networks (neighbors who know and care about each other). |
| Vulnerable population's access to economic opportunity | Better access to education and employment for poor people (many of whom have limited access to a car). |
| Policing efficiency and response times | More compact, mixed density development increases policing efficiency and reduces response times. |
| Transit security | Increased ridership increases transit security public support and efficiency (lower costs per passenger), leading to expanded programs. |
| Motor vehicle ownership | Tends to reduce total vehicle ownership and associated crime risks |

Sources

1. [The Benefits of Public Transportation – an Overview](#), American Public Transportation Association, September 2004.
2. [Safe Travels: Evaluating Mobility Management Traffic Safety Impacts](#), Todd Litman and Steven Fitzroy; Victoria Transport Policy Institute, August 29, 2013.
3. [Comparing the fatality risks in United States transportation across modes and over time](#), Ian Savage, *Research in Transportation Economics*, Volume 43, Issue 1, July 2013.
4. [Protecting People from Motor-Vehicle-related Deaths and Injuries](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, July 2012.
5. [The Effects of the Announcement and Opening of Light Rail Transit Stations on Neighborhood Crime](#), Stephen B. Billings, Suzanne Leland, and David Swindell; *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Volume 33, Issue 5, pages 549–566, December 2011.
6. [Safer Than You Think! Revising the Transit Safety Narrative](#), Todd Litman and Steven Fitzroy; Victoria Transport Policy Institute, November 4, 2013.