



Transit Myths & Facts

Myth: Public transit benefits only those who use it.

Fact: Public transit offers benefits to entire communities, as well as transit riders.

- Those who use transit have more opportunity to travel to work, school, doctor's offices, or to visit family and friends.
- Those who do not directly use transit benefit by having less congestion on the roads. Americans living in areas served by public transportation save 646 million hours in travel time and 398 million gallons of fuel annually in congestion reduction alone.ⁱ
- Large urban areas in Indiana receive failing grades from the American Lung Association for air quality.ⁱⁱ With 60 percent of ozone in central Indiana coming from vehicle pollution, public transit benefits everyone by reducing numbers of cars and trucks on the road.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Public transit can alleviate some of the cost of automobile ownership and operation, which the American Automobile Association (AAA) averages at \$9,520 for a mid-sized car. The average household spends 18 cents of every dollar on transportation, and 94% of this goes to buying, maintaining, and operating cars, the largest expenditure after housing.^{iv}



Myth: No one wants to ride public transit.

Fact: Transit ridership is growing across the country, on all types of transit.

- Even areas with poor transit systems see increases in ridership when gas prices are high—across Indiana and the nation. Transit agencies across the country had steadily increasing ridership up to the economic recession, when many systems saw fewer riders due to less people commuting to and from work. In the second part of 2008, this translated into between 5% and 15% increases on most transit systems in Indiana.^v
- The American Public Transportation Association (APTA)'s Green Travel Forecast 2010, a national travel survey, reports that 52 percent of summer vacationers will use local public transportation systems to get around during their trip.^{vi}

Myth: Public transit must be subsidized, while other forms of transportation do not.

Fact: All transportation is subsidized, whether highways, airports, or transit.

- Many people believe that cars and trucks pay the full cost of roads through gasoline and diesel fuel taxes, but only 89 percent of highway transportation is funded by fuel taxes. The other 11 percent, or \$367 million in 2007-2008^{vii}, comes from additional taxes and fines.^{viii}



Myth: We won't give up cars.

Fact: Transit in Indiana is an additional travel choice—and Americans value choice.

- Cities all across the nation have seen huge increases in public transit use for sporting and other special events, even from non-typical transit riders. In these cases, transit reduces the stress and fees associated with parking, while reducing overall congestion and adding travel options for event goers.^{ix}
- From 1995 to 2008—directly before

the economic recession—transit ridership increased by 38%. This is higher than the 21% increase that US highways saw during the same period.^x This shows that millions of Americans choose transit when given a meaningful choice.

Fact: Not everyone is able to drive, or owns a car

- ADA-Indiana has released the 2010 Report Card which ranks accessible transportation for the 16.5% of Hoosiers who are disabled^{xi} a 'C-' and lists better access as a top priority for action.^{xii}
- Indiana's residents age 65 and over made up 12 percent of the population in 2009. By 2030, that number will increase by 50 percent and be closer to 20 percent of our population. This is a significant portion of Indiana's population who will be less able or willing to drive. Continuing a connection with medical offices, grocery, and family will still be important, even as the ability to drive to these places declines.^{xiii}

Myth: Public transit often can increase sprawl.

Fact: Rail transit encourages denser urban development, and mixed use developments.

- Over the last half of this decade, development around rail lines has consistently been named a "best bet for investors" by "Emerging Trends in Real Estate," a highly regarded report from real estate, development, and investment industries due to demand.^{xiv}
- These outcomes are the opposite of sprawl. Rail line expansion in lightly-developed areas may encourage more development along the rail line including mixed use of housing, jobs, shops, restaurants, and entertainment.^{xv}

Myth: Public transit really doesn't get cars permanently off the road.

Fact: Diverse transit systems create walkable communities and reduce the need for personal vehicles.

- In some cities, automobile ownership has declined slightly where transit was expanded.^{xvi} Rail benefits communities by creating more compact land use patterns and more travel choices, which reduce per capita vehicle ownership and mileage. An average of one-third of commuter trips in cities with large rail systems occur by transit. Transit reduces per capita congestion costs by over \$250 a year in cities with large rail transit systems. In our capital city, congestion costs were at \$478 million in 2005. Each driver spends around \$835 a year on congestion in Indianapolis.^{xvii}



ⁱ American Public Transportation Association. "Public Transportation: Facts At a Glance." 2010. <http://www.publictransportation.org/facts/>.

ⁱⁱ American Lung Association. "State of the Air 2010." 2010. www.stateoftheair.org.

ⁱⁱⁱ Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization.

^{iv} See reference i.

^v American Public Transportation Association. "Public Transportation Ridership Report." 2008.

^{vi} American Public Transportation Association. "Green Travel Forecast." 2010.

^{vii} National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission. "Paying Our Way: A New Framework for Transportation Finance." 2009.

^{viii} Other taxes and fines include sales tax on tractors, Heavy Vehicle Use Tax, and a federal excise tax on tires. See reference vii.

^{ix} Weyrich, Paul M. and William S. Lind. "How Transit Benefits People Who Do Not Ride It: A Conservative Inquiry." Oct. 2003.

^x See reference i.

^{xi} STATS Indiana. Indiana Business Research Center, Indiana University, Kelley School of Business.

^{xii} ADA-Indiana. "ADA Report Card-Cities and Towns of Indiana." July 2010.

^{xiii} See reference x.

^{xiv} Reconnecting America and the Center for Transit-Oriented Development. "TOD 101." March 2007.

^{xv} See reference xiv.

^{xvi} Victoria Transport Policy Institute

^{xvii} US Department of Transportation. Federal Highway Administration, The Indiana Division. "Indiana Quick Clearance Working Group." 2008.