



Business Member Legislative and Transit Board Members Legislative Subcommittees

Agenda

**Sunday, April 7, 2024
9:45 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. ET**

**JW Marriot, Washington, DC
Room: Capitol Ballroom Salons A-C (Ballroom Level)**

1. Welcome and Call to Order—

Business Member Legislative Subcommittee
Brian Tynan, Chair
Caroline Decker, Vice Chair

Transit Board Members Legislative Subcommittee
Beth Holbrook, Chair
Balwinder Singh, Vice Chair

2. APTA Advocacy Priorities, Legislative Highlights, and Regulatory Update—Melissa Mejias, Director, and TaNeesha Johnson, Legislative Analyst, APTA Government Affairs and Advocacy

3. THUD Appropriations Capital Investment Grants (CIG) Outreach—Beth Holbrook

- a. Rep. Blumenauer-led CIG Letter
- b. FY 2025 THUD Appropriations Bill—CIG Programmatic Requests

4. Work Plan Discussion—Brian Tynan

- a. APTA Capitol Hill Advocacy Afternoon and APTA Annual Fly-In
- b. Transit Ballot Initiative Application Process and Updates—Brian Tynan
- c. APTA's Center for Transportation Excellence (CFTE) and Resources to Support Transit Campaigns and Elections—Art Guzzetti, Vice President, APTA Mobility Initiatives and Public Policy, and Jessica Grennan, CFTE

5. Open Discussion

6. Adjourn

ENCLOSED DOCUMENTS

- APTA Legislative Update (04.01.2024)
- APTA Legislative Agenda Palm Card (04.01.2024)
- APTA TALKING POINTS THUD Appropriations: Public Transit (04.01.2024)
- APTA TALKING POINTS THUD Appropriations: Passenger Rail (04.01.2024)
- APTA MESSAGING GUIDE Talking About the Economic Impact of Public Transportation (04.01.2024)
- [APTA Capital Investment Grants Project Pipeline Dashboard](#) (03.11.2024)
- APTA POLICY BRIEF Public Transportation Ridership Update (04.01.2024)
- APTA 2023 Fact Book Infographic (04.01.2024)
- APTA Advocacy Tools One-Pager (04.01.2024)
- APTA Research Products Summary (04.01.2024)



Legislative Update

This year, APTA is focused on three major initiatives:

- **aggressively advocating for public transportation investments** in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill (THUD Appropriations bill);
- **actively working to ensure successful implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)** (P.L. 117-58), commonly referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, **and the Inflation Reduction Act** (P.L. 117-169); and
- **carrying out a holistic advocacy outreach effort** focused on specific Members of Congress.

Aggressively Advocating for Public Transportation Investments in the FY 2025 THUD Appropriations Bill

In March 2024, Congress enacted the THUD Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-42, Division F). The THUD Appropriations Act provides the overwhelming majority of public transit and passenger rail investments authorized in the IIJA. APTA strongly supported the final THUD Appropriations Act.

The THUD Appropriations Act, together with the IIJA's advance appropriations, provides **\$20.9 billion for public transit** in FY 2024, which is **\$364 million (2 percent)** less than the FY 2023 enacted level. This total funding represents **96 percent** of the amount authorized in the IIJA. The THUD Appropriations Act fully funds the public transit contract authority of \$14 billion as provided by the IIJA. The Act, together with the IIJA advance appropriations, provides \$3.8 billion for Capital Investment Grants (CIG). Currently, communities are requesting more than \$45.3 billion of CIG funds in FY 2024 and subsequent years to fund construction of 66 projects in 24 states. View [APTA's CIG Project Pipeline Dashboard](#).

In addition, the THUD Appropriations Act and IIJA provide **\$16.3 billion** for passenger and freight rail in FY 2024, which is **\$383 million (2 percent)** less than the FY 2023 enacted level. This total funding represents **80 percent** of the amount authorized in the IIJA.

On March 11, 2024, President Biden submitted his FY 2025 Budget Request to Congress. The President requests \$21.1 billion for public transit and \$16.4 billion for passenger rail in FY 2025. The President's Budget Request also includes several important policy proposals, such as expanding public transit agencies' authority to acquire land prior to the completion of National Environmental Policy Act review.

This year, APTA urges Congress and the Biden-Harris Administration to honor the promise of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law by fully funding public transportation. Specifically, we urge Congress and the Administration to:

- **provide at least \$21.9 billion for public transit and \$20.6 billion for passenger rail in FY 2025;** and
- **accelerate project delivery by enacting commonsense regulatory reform,** such as streamlining real property acquisition for public transit projects.

***Working to Ensure Successful Implementation of
the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
and the Inflation Reduction Act***

IIJA

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed the IIJA into law. The IIJA provides **\$108.2 billion** for public transit over five years (FY 2022 through FY 2026), an increase of **\$42.4 billion (64 percent)** from current levels. These historic increases in public transit investments include \$91.2 billion of guaranteed funding (i.e., contract authority and advance appropriations) and \$17.0 billion of General Fund authorizations subject to appropriations for CIG and other grants.

The legislation also provides **\$102.1 billion** for passenger and freight rail over five years, an increase of **\$86.7 billion (561 percent)** from current levels. These historic passenger rail investments include \$66 billion of guaranteed funding (i.e., advance appropriations) and \$36.1 billion of General Fund authorizations subject to appropriations for Amtrak and other programs. In addition, the IIJA includes significant funding for multimodal investments (e.g., Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) and Mega grants) that include public transit and passenger rail as essential elements.

APTA is actively working with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) on successful implementation of the IIJA. Since enactment of the legislation, DOT has awarded billions of dollars for public transit and passenger rail competitive grants. In addition, DOT, the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration, and other agencies have issued final rules, Notices of Proposed Rulemaking, Guidance, Dear Colleague letters, and Requests for Information regarding IIJA implementation. APTA has actively engaged in this regulatory process and provided numerous comments on IIJA implementation, including comments on public transit safety, Buy America, CIG, and innovative financing.

To assist APTA members in tracking IIJA funding apportionments and competitive grant opportunities and policy actions, APTA has created a [Smart Guide to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act](#). The APTA Smart Guide includes funding and apportionment tables, section-by-section analyses, and DOT guidance, regulations, and Notices of Funding Opportunities. The Smart Guide also includes advocacy and media toolkits to help APTA members tell their Bipartisan Infrastructure Law success stories. In addition, APTA has developed a [Regulatory Matrix](#) to track all regulatory and other administrative actions.

Inflation Reduction Act

On August 16, 2022, President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 into law. The Act incorporates numerous important provisions that benefit public transportation, including alternative fuel tax credits and significant new investments in climate, zero-emission technology, equity, and environmental streamlining. The Inflation Reduction Act:

- extends the excise tax credits for alternative fuels, biodiesel, and renewable diesel;
- expands and substantially restructures the alternative fuel vehicle property credit;
- establishes a new commercial clean vehicle tax credit; and
- provides significant new investments in climate, zero-emission technology, equity, and environmental review, including \$3.2 billion for Neighborhood Access and Equity Grants and \$2 billion for Low-Carbon Transportation Materials Grants.

APTA is engaging with DOT and the U.S. Department of the Treasury on efficient implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act. APTA is focused on successful delivery of the new commercial clean vehicle tax credit. Section 13403 of the Act creates a new tax credit (up to \$40,000) for commercial clean vehicles (e.g., zero-emission buses). Commercial clean vehicles include battery electric and fuel cell vehicles. This 10-year tax credit took effect in 2023. On March 11, 2024, the Department of the Treasury issued a final rule on the elective payment of applicable credits, including the new commercial clean vehicle tax credit. APTA is actively working to ensure that public transit agencies benefit from this provision and receive a direct payment in lieu of a tax credit.

Carrying Out a Holistic Advocacy Outreach Effort

Finally, APTA is carrying out a holistic outreach effort focused on specific Members of Congress, particularly key transportation leaders. This initiative involves the meticulous identification of key transportation lawmakers and the execution of a coordinated advocacy campaign, together with APTA members, aimed at advancing APTA's objectives. This strategy is focused on grassroots advocacy, and **we urge APTA members to:**

- use APTA's Action Center for targeted advocacy campaigns;
- utilize APTA's Industry Footprint to highlight the breadth of public transportation providers, businesses, and funding in your Congressional District and State;
- encourage APTA public transit agencies to use APTA's My Economic Impact Tool to calculate the economic impact of your transit service;
- engage Voices for Public Transit advocates for targeted advocacy campaigns; and
- create local media campaigns (e.g., videos, editorials, letters to the editor).

For instance, APTA has created a specific advocacy campaign for fully funding CIG. Last year, APTA worked to encourage Representatives to sign a letter, led by Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), to House Committee on Appropriations leaders to fully fund CIG in the FY 2024 THUD Appropriations bill. Utilizing its [CIG Project Pipeline Dashboard](#), APTA engaged CIG project sponsors to assist in this effort and 124 Representatives signed the letter urging full funding of CIG—double the number of signers in FY 2022. This year, in addition to continuing to build upon this success, APTA is urging CIG project sponsors to contact their Members of Congress to submit programmatic requests to the THUD Subcommittee for full funding of the program.

More generally, we strongly encourage all APTA members to meet with their Members of Congress to:

- outline the role that public transportation plays in your communities and the nation's economy; and
- educate them on the need to honor the promise of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law by fully funding public transportation in the FY 2025 THUD Appropriations bill.

At both the Legislative Conference and the annual Fly-In, APTA assists members with scheduling meetings with their Congressional delegations to facilitate members' advocacy activities. During the record-setting 2023 Fly-In, 60 APTA members conducted 105 in-person meetings with Members of Congress and staff.

Most importantly, we urge APTA members to tell your stories of the difference that these public transit and passenger rail investments are making in the lives of people of your communities.

Public Transportation Grows the Economy and Creates Opportunities

- Public transportation **grows the economy and connects people to jobs, education, healthcare, businesses, and other opportunities.**
- It is a **\$79 billion industry** that directly **employs more than 430,000 people and supports millions of private-sector jobs.**
- Every **\$1 billion invested** in public transportation **creates or sustains** nearly **50,000 jobs** across the entire economy.
- Each **\$1 invested** in public transportation **generates \$5 in long-term economic returns.**
- **9 of 10 transit trips directly benefit the economy** by bringing people to where they spend and earn money.
- **Buy America laws** ensure that public transportation funds are used to **create American jobs, construct our public transportation systems, and manufacture railcars and buses in the U.S.**

See How Public Transportation Benefits Your Community

apta.com/TransitImpact



**American
Public Transportation
Association**

Honor the Promise of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law by Fully Funding Public Transportation

- **Provide \$21.9 billion for Public Transit and \$20.6 billion for Passenger Rail in FY 2025** to bring public transportation systems to a state of good repair and meet the mobility demands of communities; and
- **Accelerate Project Delivery** by enacting commonsense regulatory reform, such as streamlining real property acquisition for public transit projects.



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THUD Appropriations: Public Transit

April 1, 2024

In March 2024, Congress enacted the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-42, Division F) (THUD Appropriations Act). The THUD Appropriations Act provides \$20.9 billion for public transit investments in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. On March 11, President Biden submitted his FY 2025 Budget Request, proposing \$21.1 billion for public transit.

APTA urges Congress to honor the promise of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law by fully funding public transit in the FY 2025 THUD Appropriations bill.

Public transportation is a **\$79 billion** industry that directly employs more than **430,000** people and supports **millions** of private-sector jobs.

APTA urges Congress to provide at least \$21.9 billion for public transit in the THUD Appropriations bill (when combined with the advance appropriations of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law). These investments will help bring public transit systems to a state of good repair and meet the mobility demands of communities.

For Capital Investment Grants (CIG), APTA urges Congress to provide **\$4.6 billion** to help communities meet mobility demands. Today, **66 projects in 24 States** across the nation are seeking **\$45.3 billion** of CIG funds.



Every \$1 invested in public transit generates \$5 in long-term economic returns.



Every \$1 billion invested in public transit creates or sustains nearly 50,000 jobs across the entire economy.



9 of 10 transit trips directly benefit the economy by bringing people to where they spend and earn money.

APTA urges Congress to:

- ✓ **Provide at least \$21.9 billion for Public Transit in the FY 2025 THUD Appropriations bill**, including \$4.6 billion for Capital Investment Grants;
- ✓ **Accelerate project delivery by enacting commonsense regulatory reform**, such as streamlining real property acquisition for public transit projects.



THUD Appropriations: Passenger Rail

April 1, 2024

In March 2024, Congress enacted the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-42, Division F) (THUD Appropriations Act). The THUD Appropriations Act provides \$16.3 billion for passenger rail investments for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. On March 11, President Biden submitted his FY 2025 Budget Request, proposing \$16.4 billion for passenger and freight rail.

APTA urges Congress to honor the promise of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law by fully funding passenger rail in the FY 2025 THUD Appropriations bill.

Public transportation is a **\$79 billion** industry that directly employs more than **430,000** people and supports **millions** of private-sector jobs.

APTA urges Congress to provide at least \$20.6 billion for passenger rail in the THUD Appropriations bill (when combined with the advance appropriations of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law). These investments will help bring passenger rail systems to a state of good repair and meet the mobility demands of communities. Today, the Federal Railroad Administration is advancing 69 Corridor projects across 44 States.

For Amtrak, APTA urges Congress to provide **\$4.0 billion** in the THUD Appropriations bill to help it meet the mobility demands of its customers. Congress must also fully fund **Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail, Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement, and Railroad Cross Elimination Grants**.



Every \$1 invested in public transit generates \$5 in long-term economic returns.



Every \$1 billion invested in public transit creates or sustains nearly 50,000 jobs across the entire economy.



9 of 10 transit trips directly benefit the economy by bringing people to where they spend and earn money.

APTA urges Congress to:

- ✓ **Provide at least \$20.6 billion for Passenger Rail in the FY 2025 THUD Appropriations bill**, including fully funding Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail, Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement, and Railroad Cross Elimination Grants.

Overview: Talking About the Economic Impact of Public Transportation

In 2024, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Communications conducted message research to improve how we tell the story of public transportation’s economic impact to local and national elected officials.

Our testing found that more than 85% of survey respondents believe public transportation is important to the economy.

This positive sentiment means your message will be well received by elected officials — and that your voice is critical to explaining the economic value of public transportation and securing ongoing support and funding.

As you meet with Members of Congress and their staff, as well as local elected officials in your communities, we want to shift conversations to focus on the national and local economic benefits of public transportation — beyond who rides or is employed by local systems.

We also found that our message was more persuasive — sometimes up to 12 times as much — when we used real stories and statistics.

Below is APTA’s recommended key messaging for Congressional, staff, and local elected audiences, including examples of proof points and stories to bring our messages to life.

Key Message	Your Message	Customize for Your Area
Transit creates economic growth for our community and our country.	Public transportation doesn’t just benefit those who ride it. Public transportation strengthens our economies by connecting employees to employers, customers to commerce, and communities to investment opportunities. Transit keeps our cities competitive and growing.	<i>How has public transit helped your community grow (E.g., attracting businesses, tax revenue or expanded housing and development)?</i> <i>What are examples of how public transportation is innovating for the future?</i>
Transit creates good-paying jobs across all sectors of the economy.	Public transportation employs more than 430,000 people and supports millions of private sector jobs. From companies that build buses to local transit systems, public transportation creates high-paying American jobs in key sectors like constructing, manufacturing, engineering, and operations.	<i>How many people does your business or transit system employ?</i> <i>How many American suppliers and companies do you use?</i>
Transit gets people where they need to go — families, students, and workers.	Public transportation also helps communities of all sizes flourish — connecting workers to jobs, helping people get to school, bringing children to daycare. Accessible, affordable public transportation helps families, students, and workers save money and pursue financial security.	<i>Do you have examples from the last year of public transportation carrying concert attendees, sports fans, or tourists?</i> <i>Does public transit in your area link to schools, major employers, health care services, etc.?</i>
We need to keep investing in public transportation.	Continued funding is crucial to keeping our community running and our economy strong.	<i>What are some examples of how your transit agency or company has used federal funding? Or plans to use funding?</i>

Deep Dive: Tailoring Your Economic Impact Messaging

Our research also found that certain key messages are more persuasive with each of APTA's audiences. Differences include:

When meeting with elected officials who may be concerned about spending or who have previously opposed transportation funding, emphasize the impact on our national economy and workers.

Public transportation is essential for America's economy:

- It supports hundreds of thousands of jobs every year, in every corner of the U.S., in industries from rail to operations. **Every \$1 invested in public transportation generates \$5 in long-term economic returns.**
- Funding transit today will generate strong economic returns that will keep the economy strong tomorrow. **Nearly \$42 billion in transit spending flows into the private sector — 65% increase since 2000.**

Public transportation is essential for American workers:

- Funding our public transit system creates good-paying jobs in manufacturing, construction, and operations. **For every \$1 billion invested, nearly 50,000 jobs are created or sustained across the entire economy.**
- Every company that supplies bus parts or builds railways needs workers. And so does every local transit system. **Public transportation relies on more than 2,000 suppliers in 48 states and Washington, D.C.**
- Sustained funding will keep American industry — and the workers that drive it — strong.

When meeting with elected officials who are supporters of public transit, emphasize families, local businesses, and sustainability.

Public transportation is essential for America's families:

- Public transportation helps Americans support their families and pursue their dreams — finding a better job, attending night school, getting to the doctor, or bringing a child to daycare. **Of all riders, 71% are employed and 7% are students.**
- Public transportation gives American families stability and security. **A family can save more than \$13,000 by taking public transportation and living with one less car.**

Public transportation is essential for America's local businesses:

- In small towns and big cities, public transportation gets people where they need to go and helps create bustling retail, service, and office hubs. **Home values were up to 24% higher near public transportation than in other areas.**
- By bringing people to work and connecting customers to businesses, public transit helps local business owners keep the lights on. **Nearly 2.8 million essential workers take public transportation to work every day — including more than 600,000 healthcare workers and 113,000 public safety and armed forces members.**

Public transportation is essential for sustainability and improved quality of life:

- From hybrid buses to light rail systems, public transportation is leading the way in clean technology development. **Nearly 20% of public transportation buses are hybrid-electric, compared to less than 1% of U.S. vehicles.**
- By using public transportation, workers, students, and families reduce their carbon footprint, decreasing air pollution and lowering health risks for everyone. **Public transportation's overall effects save the U.S. 6 billion gallons of gasoline annually.**

APTA Public Transportation Ridership Update

Key Takeaways

1. After falling to 20 percent of pre-pandemic levels in April 2020, public transit ridership has recovered to **79 percent** of pre-pandemic levels.
2. Transit riders took **7.1 billion trips** on public transportation in 2023, a **16 percent increase** over 2022.
3. Public transportation ridership levels increased throughout 2023, while office occupancy rates remained stagnant.
4. Success in ridership recovery has been dependent on transit service delivery and reliability and external factors, such as the makeup of local economies.
5. As clearly illustrated during the pandemic, public transportation provides mobility to essential workers, which has sustained transit ridership over the past four years.

National Ridership Picture

Return-to-office policies and a strong job market both have positive implications for public transportation ridership recovery. However, office occupancy rates remained flat at 50 percent throughout 2023, according to Kastle Systems.¹ Regardless of slow office occupancy recovery, public transit ridership recovery has continued. This recovery indicates that transit agencies are having success in attracting non-commute trips. Current data remains limited, but indicators in several metro regions point to transit recovery being led by trips to and from residential and commercial areas as opposed to office/work centers. More time and data are needed to determine if this transit demand shift will remain the driving force for ridership return.

With transit ridership recovering at a much faster rate than office attendance, other factors must be considered for transit's rebound. Non-office jobs, such as work in restaurants and bars, have rebounded tremendously since March 2020. According to the National Restaurant Association, the restaurant industry was the largest job creator from January 2021 to May 2023.² Many restaurant jobs require late-night hours and are generally lower income than office jobs. Average bus rider demographics generally

¹ Kastle data aggregated from several weekly data update emails. www.kastle.com.

² <https://restaurant.org/research-and-media/media/press-releases/restaurant-job-growth-continues-nationwide/>.

align with those of restaurant or other late-night employees, indicating a significant reason for bus ridership increases leading overall transit recovery.

The structure and makeup of local economies also impact the degree of transit ridership decline. Technology-focused economies with an existing and prominent work-from-home culture initially noticed a steeper decline in ridership than those with more service industry jobs and essential workers who power the supply chain. Systems in college towns were also severely affected, as many universities closed and sent students home. Regions of the country that were hardest hit early in the pandemic (e.g., the Northeast, Seattle, and San Francisco Bay areas) had, in general, larger ridership drops than other areas of the country that saw the worst pandemic impacts later in 2020.

Bus ridership recovery has been the consistent leader compared to other transit modes largely due to bus rider demographics. According to APTA's *Who Rides Public Transportation*, 22 percent of bus riders are under the age of 25, twice the percentage of younger rail riders. With bus riders on average earning less than rail riders and often working non-office jobs, they have been a critical driver of ridership recovery for many public transit agencies.³ Regional differences in modal ridership return have presented themselves. Generally, Bus and Demand Response have led the way followed by Heavy/Light Rail and Commuter Rail trailing. However, some regions have bucked that trend. For instance, at the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority in the Boston area, Commuter Rail ridership return leads Heavy and Light Rail ridership return.

Ridership tracked closely with job growth generally, and service industry jobs more specifically. The cost of car ownership provides another insight into why people have been choosing public transit. A recent analysis conducted by APTA shows that riders can save more than \$13,000 annually by using public transit instead of driving.⁴

After a rapid decline in March and April 2020 to 19 percent of pre-pandemic levels, public transit ridership recovered quickly to approximately 37 percent of pre-pandemic ridership as of July 2020. National transit ridership remained at that approximate level until early 2021, rising to 42 percent of pre-pandemic levels by April 2021.

In April and May 2021, COVID-19 vaccines became widely available. The availability of vaccines resulted in another sustained increase in ridership, with national ridership rising from 42 percent in April to 53 percent in July 2021. During this time, data indicated that more people were returning to offices and starting to increase other types of outside-the-home activities.

Another surge in ridership growth occurred in September and October 2021. Many transit systems that served universities reported significant gains in fall and winter 2021 as students returned to campus. More employees returned to their offices during this time, though the uptake was tempered by the surge in COVID-19 cases due to the Delta variant.

Ridership remained steady through December 2021, when it stood at 58 percent of pre-pandemic ridership. In December, the COVID-19 surge due to the Omicron variant led to reduced travel, and it also

³ [APTA, *Who Rides Public Transportation*.](#)

⁴ <https://www.apta.com/research-technical-resources/research-reports/transit-savings-report/>.

had significant impacts on public transportation workforces and services. Many transit agencies reported difficulty with service reliability because of the number of operators, mechanics, and other transit workers required to stay at home because of COVID. Ridership dropped to 52 percent of pre-pandemic levels in early January 2022.

As the Omicron wave subsided, public transportation ridership began to rise again. From mid-February to April 2022, national public transit ridership was approximately 60 percent of pre-pandemic levels.

From late spring to fall 2022, ridership recovery continued. In May, national ridership was at 60 percent of 2019 levels; it grew to 66 percent of 2019 levels by September 2022. Ridership levels also increased during the fourth quarter of 2022. As of January 2023, national ridership stood at 71 percent of 2019 levels. National ridership remained at close to that level through the summer of 2023.

In the fall of 2023, public transit ridership began to increase again. In September 2023, ridership rose to 74 percent of 2019 levels, and remained at that level through the end of 2023. Public transit ridership rose 16 percent from 2022 to 2023, to 7.1 billion total trips in 2023. In the first three months of 2024, APTA's Ridership Trends Dashboard finds that U.S. public transportation ridership has fluctuated between 73 and 79 percent of 2019 levels, when comparing the same week in each year.

Important Trends

APTA's Quarterly Ridership Report data indicates that ridership recovery has differed based on city size. In general, smaller cities have recovered ridership to a higher level than larger cities. The largest urban areas (population more than 2 million) and medium-sized urban areas (population 500,000 to 2 million) have recovered ridership to approximately the same level when compared to 2019. In general, smaller cities tend to serve relatively fewer riders with alternatives such as teleworking. Office return data also suggests that proportionally more workers in smaller cities are working in offices than in larger cities. The data from medium-sized urban areas suggest that those areas have had particular difficulty attracting office workers and those with more options back to transit. Data from APTA's Quarterly Ridership Report indicates that, in Q4 2023, smaller cities (population 100,000 to 500,000) had recovered to 79 percent of 2019 transit ridership levels. The largest and medium-sized urban areas recovered to 74 percent of 2019 levels.

National public transit ridership has seen regular increases around September and October of each year. While corroborating data is difficult to find, it is possible that this ridership increase is because individuals often change schedules and routines around this time of year. The end of summer and the start of the school year may present an opportunity for families to reconsider how they get around, or how many days they choose to work in the office. New students start at colleges and universities across the country in the fall, often representing a large change in routine for those students. These changes in routine have the potential to encourage more public transit use and, in turn, increase ridership.

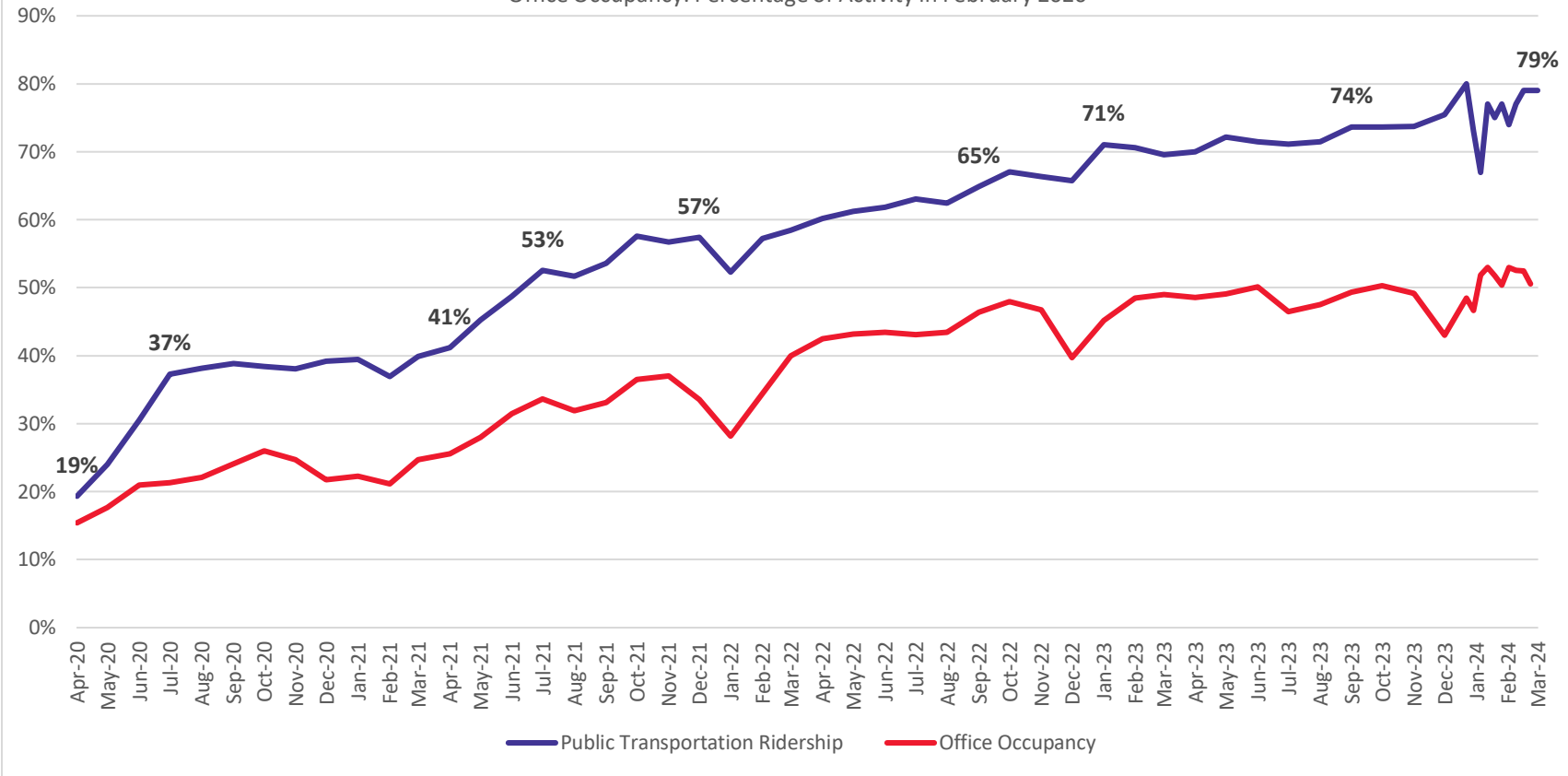
The following chart details public transportation ridership from April 2020 to March 2024, and office occupancy rates in 10 cities for the same time period. Ridership data is from APTA's 2020 - 2023 Quarterly Ridership Reports and APTA's Ridership Trends Dashboard, while office occupancy data is courtesy of Kastle Systems.

Public Transportation Ridership and Office Occupancy

2020 - 2024

Ridership: Percent of Same Period in 2019

Office Occupancy: Percentage of Activity in February 2020



Sources:

APTA Quarterly Ridership Reports, April 2020 – December 2023; [APTA Ridership Trends Dashboard](#) January 2024 – March 2024; [Kastle Back to Work Barometer](#), Kastle Systems.

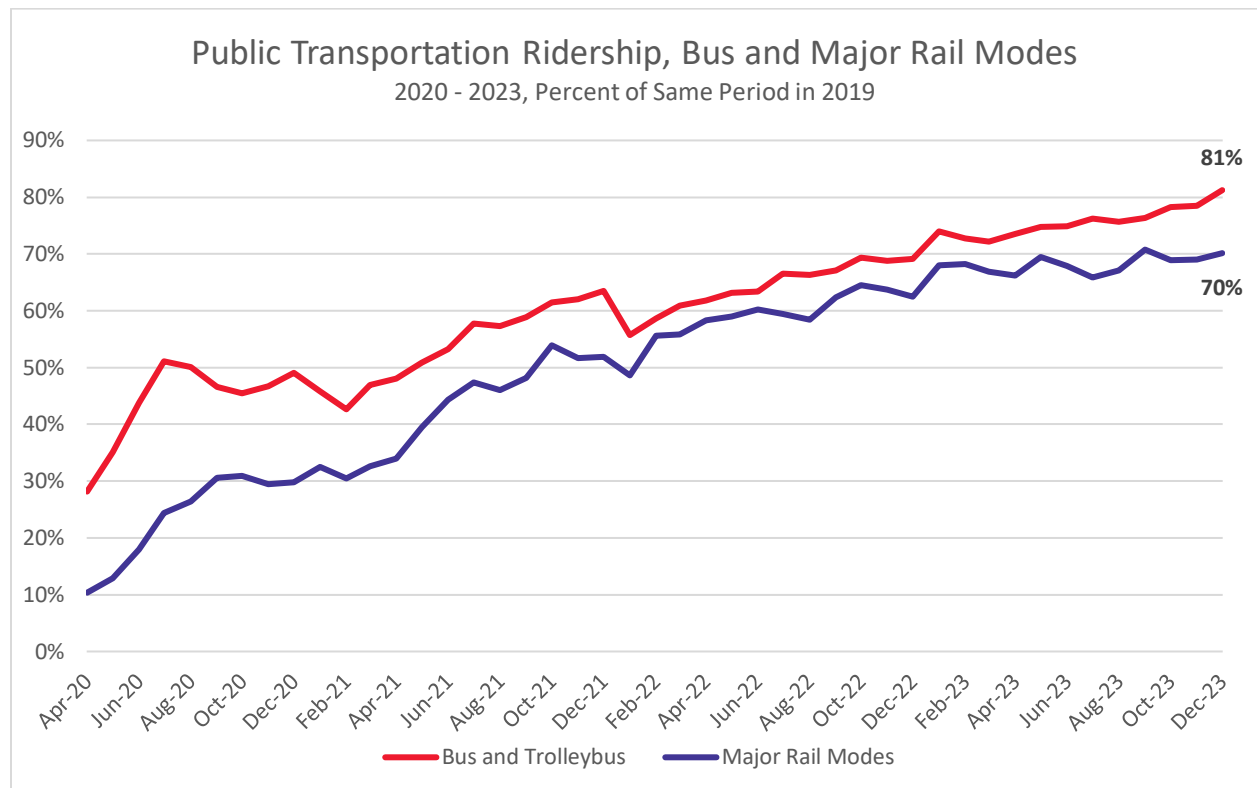
Modal Differences

Although all public transit modes saw significant decreases in ridership because of the COVID-19 pandemic, rail modes (i.e., heavy rail, light rail, streetcar, commuter rail, and hybrid rail) had comparatively larger decreases compared to bus modes. During the early part of the pandemic, rail ridership decreased to 10 percent of pre-pandemic levels in April 2020, while bus ridership decreased to 28 percent of pre-pandemic levels.

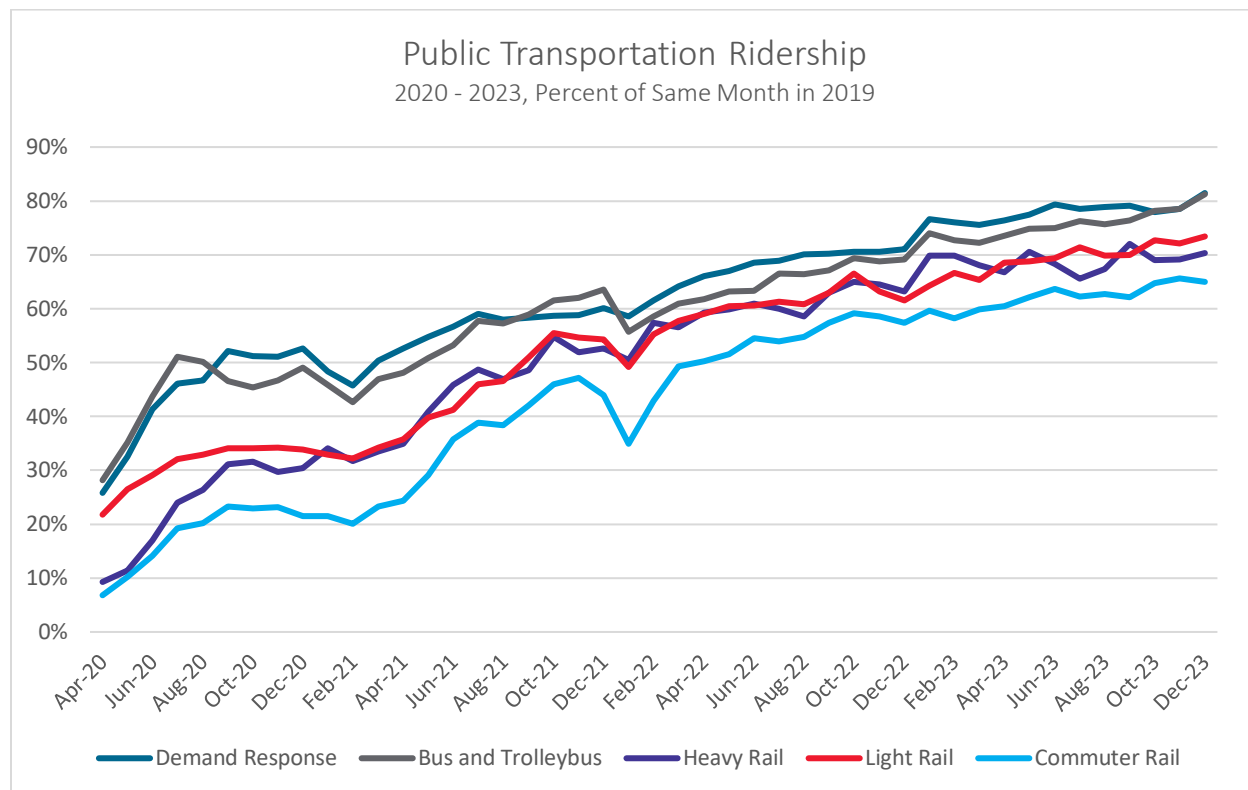
In general, bus modes have been able to retain more riders than rail modes because they generally serve more essential workers, while rail modes serve more office commuters. During the pandemic, rail riders have been more likely to have options to work from home.

Bus ridership has seen a relatively steady increase since February 2021. On the other hand, rail ridership more clearly shows the impact of vaccinations and other factors described in the previous section. Rail ridership shows a sustained increase from April to June 2021, and another increase in September and October 2021, coinciding with the wide availability of COVID-19 vaccines, and the post-summer return to offices and school, respectively. All modes show the impact of the Omicron wave in January 2022, although rail ridership recovered more quickly from the Omicron wave than bus ridership.

Throughout 2022, both bus and rail modes saw a steady increase in ridership relative to 2019, adding almost 13 percent across all modes. Bus ridership was at 69 percent of 2019 levels in December 2022, and rail ridership recovered to 62 percent of 2019 levels. During 2023, bus ridership grew by 12 percentage points to 81 percent of 2019 levels, while rail ridership grew by eight percentage points relative to 2019, ending the year at 70 percent.



Considering individual modes, Demand Response and Bus have recovered the most ridership, reaching 81 percent of pre-pandemic levels in December 2023. Heavy and Light Rail are at 70 and 73 percent of 2019 ridership levels, respectively, and Commuter Rail is currently at 65 percent of pre-pandemic levels as of December.



Commuter rail historically has seen increased ridership with high gas prices, but the spring and summer gas price increases did not drive an increase in ridership. Of note, regions with the highest gas prices are also the ones with the most extensive commuter rail systems impacting regional ridership return.

Comparison to Travel on Roads and Streets

Motor vehicle travel has only recently eclipsed pre-pandemic levels. According to the Federal Highway Administration’s Traffic Volume Trends report,⁵ travel on U.S. roads and streets in 2023 was higher than 2019 levels by one tenth of one percent.

What Leads to Ridership Success

APTA’s *On the Horizon: Planning for Post-Pandemic Travel* report collected best practices on transit ridership successes. Agencies that were successful in retaining ridership made sure to consistently communicate with the public, keeping them abreast of changes to public transit service; conduct reinforcing social media campaigns; and monitor customer feedback. They thought proactively about service, focusing on essential workers and social equity, communities of color, and low-income families.

⁵ https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/travel_monitoring/tvt.cfm.

These agencies also emphasized rider and employee safety. Sanitation measures implemented by many transit agencies with more routine cleaning protected riders and provided greater feelings of safety. They worked to develop effective cleaning protocols for vehicles and stations and worked with labor representatives to develop protocols to keep employees safe and healthy.

Agencies stand to increase ridership and achieve other goals by focusing efforts on historically marginalized communities. Rebuilding post-COVID provides a unique opportunity for reinvestment in equitable transit. Investing in transit operations to better support hourly, late-night, and early-morning workers who rely on public transit would further equity goals by providing transit choices for at-risk residents. With investments in communities of low income and otherwise vulnerable people, public transit agencies can regain lost ridership and support the larger community.

Real estate investment in central-city areas, in partnership with transit agencies, will potentially further support increased ridership. Development of affordable and market-priced housing in proximity to transit routes will serve to benefit all community residents, including transit riders. Community outreach programs for transit agencies are vital to securing an equitable future: transit agencies need feedback to know how to best serve their customers and communities. With improved community engagement, strategic identification of residents' needs can be achieved more efficiently.

How Can Public Transit Agencies Adapt to the Future

Key changes in operations and planning can help public transit agencies adapt to the future. APTA's *On the Horizon* report organizes these key changes into four overarching themes:

- Institutionalize Best Practices from the COVID-19 Period;
- Plan and Operate More Effectively in Prioritizing Social Equity;
- Leverage Opportunities to Expand Ridership; and
- Keep Abreast of Changing Trends.

For more information, please see APTA's report, [On the Horizon: Planning for Post-Pandemic Travel](#).

About the APTA Ridership Trends Dashboard with Transit app

Estimated ridership values in the APTA Ridership Trends Dashboard are modeled based on measures of Transit app usage to provide a current measure of demand for public transit. Estimated ridership values for each week are extrapolated values from the most recent quarterly actual ridership figures reported by transit agencies. These estimates represent the percent difference between actual pre-pandemic ridership and estimated ridership for a given period during the pandemic, and do not represent actual reported ridership counts from agencies.

Transit app usage is attributed to a particular transit agency if that agency's service appears as a nearby option for the user when they open the app, or if a user taps on a line operated by a particular transit agency. Surveys of Transit app users since the onset of the pandemic have shown that the app's user demographics generally match those of public transit riders overall, both compared to other common survey methods and available U.S. Census data.

Sources

APTA Ridership Report: <https://www.apta.com/research-technical-resources/transit-statistics/ridership-report/>

APTA Ridership Trends Dashboard: <https://transitapp.com/apta>

On the Horizon: Planning for Post-Pandemic Travel: <https://www.apta.com/research-technical-resources/research-reports/on-the-horizon-planning-for-post-pandemic-travel/>

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA)

The American Public Transportation Association is a nonprofit international association of 1,500 public- and private-sector organizations that represents a \$79 billion industry that directly employs 430,000 people and supports millions of private-sector jobs. APTA members are engaged in the areas of bus, paratransit, light rail, commuter rail, subways, waterborne services, and intercity and high-speed passenger rail. This includes transit systems; planning, design, construction, and finance firms; product and service providers; academic institutions; transit associations and state departments of transportation. APTA is the only association in North America that represents all modes of public transportation. APTA members serve the public interest by providing safe, efficient, and economical transit services and products.

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APTA Vision Statement

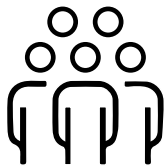
APTA leads public transportation in a new mobility era,
advocating to connect and build thriving communities

TODAY, PUBLIC TRANSIT IN AMERICA IS...

Job Creation

430K+
People

work for public transportation agencies



50K Jobs

created and supported per \$1 billion investment in job creation

Supporting Private-Sector Jobs

2,000+
SUPPLIERS

in 48 states and DC

More than

\$42 Billion
IN TRANSIT SPENDING

flows to the private sector (59% increase since 2020)

5-to-1

ECONOMIC RETURN

produced by long-term investment in public transit

\$382 Million

IN TAX REVENUE

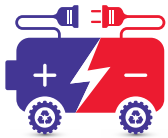
supported per \$1 billion investment in job creation

(According to APTA's "Economic Impact of Public Transportation Investment: 2020 Update")

Fostering Energy Independence

Leading in Clean Technology

Share of **Hybrid Electric Buses***



1,600+
ZERO-EMISSION BUSES

2010: **7.0%**
2023: **18.3%**

**(According to APTA's 2023 Vehicle Database)*

Lowering Carbon Emissions



55% 

less CO₂ emissions by using public transit rather than a car

(According to TCRP "Report 226: An Update on Public Transportation's Impacts on Greenhouse Gas Emissions")

Reducing Gasoline Consumption

6.0
BILLION



Gallons of Gas Saved

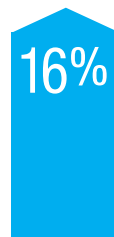
each year by using public transportation

(According to TCRP "Report 226: An Update on Public Transportation's Impacts on Greenhouse Gas Emissions")

More Efficient



Increase in vehicle miles operated per kilowatt-hour
over the Past 30 Years




Heavy Rail



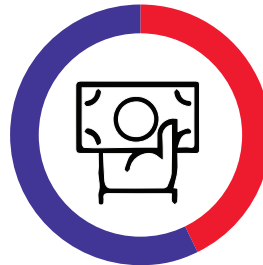
Light Rail/Streetcar

TODAY, PUBLIC TRANSIT IN AMERICA IS...

Growing the Economy

87% 
of trips on transit directly benefit the local economy

50%
of trips are to and from work



37% of trips are to shopping and recreational spending (less priority than trips to work)

(According to APTA's "Who Rides Public Transportation")

Serving All Communities

Public transit agencies are...



1,281
Rural

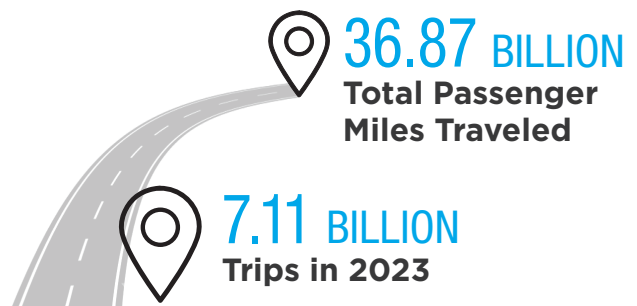


929
Urban



4.5K+
Nonprofit

Current Ridership



Number of rail systems is growing

61 2001
97 2021



Driving Innovation



79%
of buses have security cameras



6%
of buses have ped/bike detection

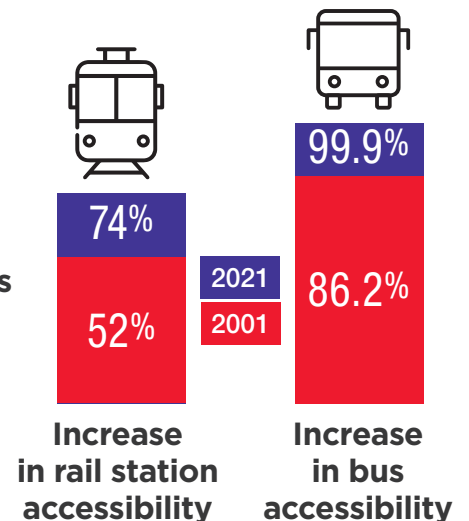


78%
of buses have automated stop announcements

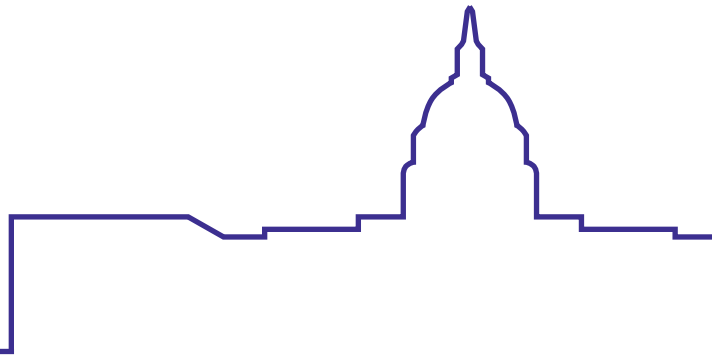
Addressing Equity*

55%
of transit riders earn under \$50k/year

* transit system accessibility is also affected by station accessibility



New Congress, New Tools!



IN THE 118TH CONGRESS, APTA members have several tools at their disposal to engage with their Members of Congress both on Capitol Hill and in their Congressional Districts. Below is a list of key resources:

APTA Advocacy Action Center

The APTA Advocacy Action Center will be used to notify you of active APTA advocacy campaigns and will make it easy for you to respond to APTA calls for action, such as emailing or otherwise reaching out to your Members of Congress, Administration officials, and the President.

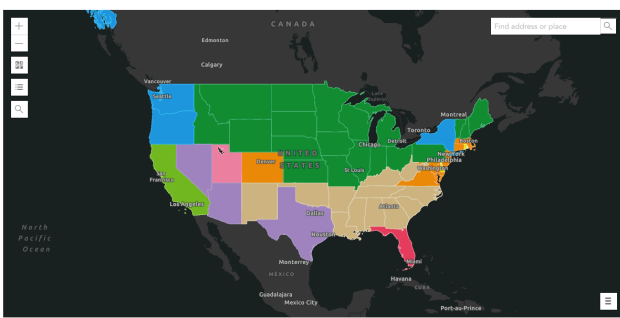
Keep an eye out for future campaigns and instructions to sign up!

Industry Footprint

APTA's Industry Footprint is a powerful advocacy tool for the public transportation industry. APTA members and the broader industry can use the Industry Footprint to view important information on public transportation providers, businesses, and funding, organized by state, Congressional District, and state legislative districts. APTA members use the Industry Footprint to explain the importance of public transportation to elected officials during events like APTA's Legislative Conference, Fly-Ins, and their own individual meetings

Data Explorer:

Browse content and take advantage of the latest demographic information. Use interactive maps to give context to your story and inform your audience.



with legislators. The Footprint contains information on more than 3,000 APTA member locations and 2,600 public transportation industry suppliers and manufacturers. Nearly every Congressional District in the country has either an APTA member, or another public transportation industry supplier.

CIG Project Pipeline Dashboard

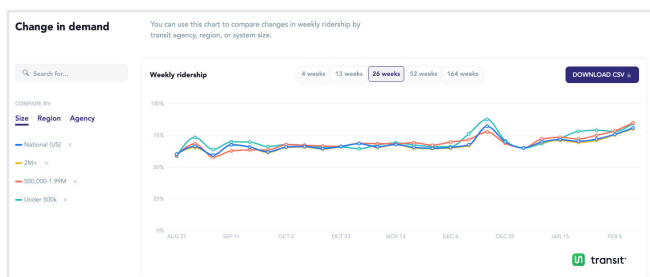
APTA's Capital Investment Grants (CIG) Project Pipeline Dashboard allows the industry to track the progress of projects in the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) CIG pipeline. To date, the Dashboard includes important information on projects with existing full funding grant agreements or seeking CIG funding. APTA's Dashboard also includes important information on the Members of Congress that represent the areas where each project is located.

My Economic Impact Tool

APTA's My Economic Impact Tool enables APTA transit agency members to use their budget data to calculate the economic impact of their transit service. The tool uses the same methodology as APTA's Economic Impact of Public Transportation report, and provides APTA members with valuable information to make the case for public transportation to elected officials, stakeholders, and the public. The analysis produces figures for jobs, wages, sales, and value-add supported by transit agency spending. The tool's reports also help users understand direct and indirect effects on the local economy, as well as the diverse occupational mix of jobs supported by public transit spending.

APTA Ridership Trends Dashboard Powered by Transit

APTA's Ridership Trends Dashboard helps the public transit industry track ridership trends in real time. This tool, built in partnership with Transit app, allows APTA members and the public to compare ridership between agencies, regions, and national trends. The Ridership Trends Dashboard combines APTA's ridership report data with app usage information from Transit to predict ridership levels each week, with new data posted each Monday. The Ridership Trends Dashboard has weekly predictions from January 2020 to today and includes ridership trends for 130 transit agencies.



APTA Smart Guide: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act

To assist APTA members in tracking IIJA and Inflation Reduction Act funding, competitive grant opportunities, and policy actions, APTA has developed a Smart Guide to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act. The APTA Smart Guide includes funding and apportionment tables, section-by-section analyses, and U.S. Department of Transportation and other agencies' Notices of Funding Opportunities, guidance, and regulations. Finally, the Smart Guide includes advocacy talking points and tools to help APTA members tell their Bipartisan Infrastructure Law success stories.

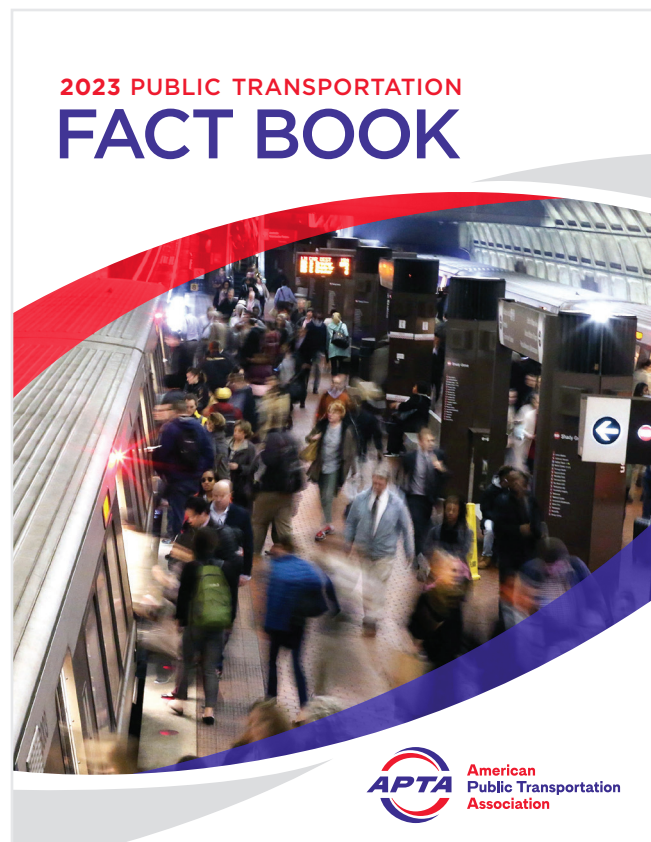


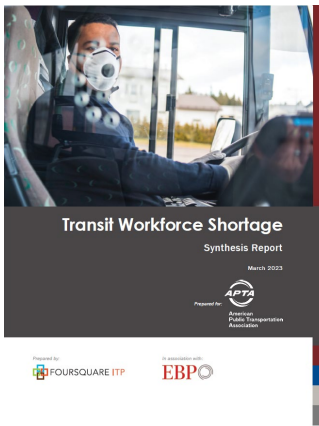
APTA Regulatory Matrix

The APTA Regulatory Matrix enables you to track all regulatory and other administrative action impacting public transportation. Using APTA's Matrix, you may sort the regulatory actions by agency, date, and comment period. The Matrix provides links to the proposed requirements, summaries, APTA Comments, and the APTA Staff Advisor.

APTA Public Transportation Fact Book

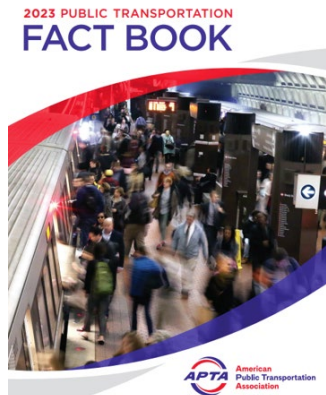
The annual Public Transportation Fact Book contains national aggregate statistical data covering all aspects of the public transit industry in the United States and Canada. Major sections include an overview of U.S. transit systems; transit finances and operating statistics by modes of travel; transit vehicle characteristics and deliveries; private-sector expenditures; modal rankings; and statistical trends of Canadian transit operations.





Transit Workforce Shortage Study and Agency Toolkit

Public transit providers across North America face a shortage of operators and mechanics, a crisis that has strained budgets and forced agencies to reduce service. APTA’s Transit Workforce Shortage Study combines information from a survey of public transit workers and interviews with public transportation agencies to provide insight into ways to address the national shortage of transit workers. The report provides information on actions that agencies have taken to address the workforce shortage, and the toolkit provides step-by-step answers to workforce shortage scenarios agencies are facing every day.



2023 Public Transportation Fact Book

The annual Public Transportation Fact Book contains national aggregate statistical data covering all aspects of the public transit industry in the United States and Canada. Major sections include an overview of U.S. transit facts, transit finances, and operating statistics by modes of travel, transit vehicle characteristics and deliveries, federal grants, and statistical trends of Canadian transit operations.



Restoring RAISE Grant Investments in Public Transportation

Although DOT has partially reoriented the RAISE Grant Program to multimodal priorities in the last three years, APTA strongly urges the Secretary of Transportation to direct a significantly greater percentage of RAISE grant funds to vital public transit and passenger rail projects. In FY 2023, the U.S. Department of Transportation awarded \$404 million for public transportation projects, equal to 18 percent of available RAISE grant funding, a slight decrease from FY 2022 and FY 2021. The percentage of RAISE grant funds awarded for public transit and passenger rail projects in FY 2020 through FY 2023 remains significantly less than the historical average.

Key Takeaways

1. The percentage of RAISE grant funds awarded for public transit and passenger rail projects in FY 2023 through FY 2021 remains significantly less than the historical average (28 percent).
2. In FY 2023, the U.S. Department of Transportation spent nearly double the amount of public transportation projects, equal to 18 percent of available RAISE grant funding. The percentage of FY 2023 public transportation investment is, by percentage, a slight decrease from FY 2022 and FY 2021.
3. Although DOT has partially reoriented the RAISE Grant Program to multimodal priorities in the last three years, APTA strongly urges the Secretary of Transportation to direct a significantly greater percentage of RAISE grant funds to vital public transit and passenger rail projects.

The rebuilding American infrastructure with sustainability and health (RAISE) program, previously known as better building investments to improve development (BIID) program and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program, has provided critical funding for public transportation infrastructure investments. Since 2010, the RAISE Grant Program has provided \$24.6 billion for critical surface transportation projects, including public transit and passenger rail investments. It has funded over 100 public transit stations, airport bus rapid transit projects, vehicle-pooling, ride-sharing, transit-oriented development, transit signal priority systems, green operations, and automated vehicle pilot projects. These projects not only help enhance mobility but also result in economic vitality, environmental, equity, and economic benefits.

Historically, the total amount requested by RAISE grant applicants greatly exceeds the amount of funding available, necessitating the competitive and successful nature of the grant program. DOT typically is only able to fund less than 10 percent of requested funds. Congress has recognized both the demonstrated need and success of the program and provided a total of \$2.275 billion for RAISE grants in FY 2020 pursuant to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Transportation Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2021.¹

¹Reauthorized this Act, the program is generally referred to as the RAISE Grant program. From 2010 to the most recent program, the program was known as the BIID program, then the TIGER program, and finally the RAISE Grant program. See the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) website for more information.



Public Transit Agencies Face Severe Fiscal Cliff

Public transit agencies experienced unprecedented decreases in ridership and fare revenue because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Transit agencies have obligated more than 99 percent of emergency funding provided by Congress. While ridership levels have recovered to more than 70 percent of pre-pandemic levels nationwide, agencies are facing looming operating budget shortfalls, or "Fiscal Cliffs".

Key Takeaways: 1. In the 2021 APTA survey of public transit agencies... 2. Overall 63 percent of 2021 operating agencies... 3. For the largest agencies... 4. The operating budget shortfall... 5. Agencies facing operating budget shortfalls... Background: Public transit agencies experienced unprecedented decreases in ridership and fare revenue because of the COVID-19 pandemic...



On the Horizon: Planning for Post-Pandemic Travel

Transit agencies played an essential role in ensuring the mobility of millions of Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic especially essential workers who kept society going even at the height of the health crisis. As the industry and nation begin to look to the future, we examine how demographic, employment, and travel trends may change in the coming decades.

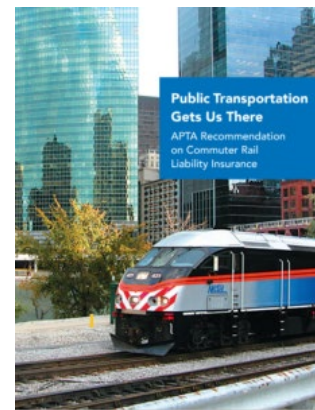
On the Horizon: Planning for Post-Pandemic Travel. November 2021. AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION



APTA Public Transportation Ridership Update

Ridership rebounded to 79 percent of pre-pandemic levels in March 2024, according to the latest data from APTA's Ridership Trends Dashboard. After declining to 20 percent of pre-pandemic levels in April 2020, ridership recovered to nearly 40 percent of pre-pandemic ridership in summer 2020.

Key Takeaways: 1. After falling to 20 percent of pre-pandemic levels in April 2020, ridership has recovered to more than 79 percent of pre-pandemic levels. 2. Transit riders took 7.2 billion trips on public transportation in 2023, a 14 percent increase over 2022. 3. Public transportation ridership was highest throughout 2023, while office occupancy rates remained stagnant. 4. Success in ridership recovery has been dependent on transit service delivery and mobility and external factors such as the status of local economies. 5. An equity statement during the pandemic, public transportation provides mobility to essential workers, which has been essential to the recovery of the local economy. National Ridership Picture: Return to office policies and a strong job market both have positive implications for public transportation ridership recovery...



APTA Recommendation on Commuter Rail Liability Insurance

Due to market conditions that have reduced competitiveness and raised prices in their insurance market, Commuter Rail Agencies have struggled, and will continue to struggle, to fill their substantial liability insurance requirements. There is a clear federal interest in maintaining and expanding effective commuter rail operations in the United States.