

# 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
<b>Transit creates economic growth for our community and our country.</b>	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>
<b>Transit creates good-paying jobs across all sectors of the economy.</b>	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>
<b>Transit gets people where they need to go — families, students, and workers.</b>	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>
<b>We need to keep investing in public transportation.</b>	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.**