

Further Investment In Public Transit Can Meet Growing Needs Of Late-Shift Workers

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WASHINGTON (September 4, 2019) – The “[Supporting Late-Shift Workers: Their Transportation Needs and the Economy](#)” study, released today by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), showcases the needs of late-shift commuters and recommends steps transit providers and decision-makers can take to improve commuting options for this growing segment of the U.S. population.

A large share of Americans work nights and weekends within industries such as food service, health care, construction, education and finance. These industries have high projected growth rates over the next seven years, but inadequate access to public transit services can prevent segments of the workforce from accessing better job opportunities while also increasing turnover and absenteeism rates for employers.

Many public transit agencies around the country operate late shift services but additional services are vitally needed, according to the study. Late-shift transit commuters earn an estimated \$28 billion in wages and generate \$84 billion in sales each year. Increased late-night transit access will result in access to opportunities for late-shift employees and increase the pool of workers for employers.

Late-shift workers in Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) are 40% less likely to commute via public transit due to inadequate service. Many are much more likely to take on the cost burden of operating personal vehicles or utilizing rideshare services like Uber and Lyft. Transit operators, along with business and political decision-makers, have an opportunity to remedy this issue.

“The late-shift is a growing source of opportunity for the American economy. When public transit providers, private sector businesses and policymakers work together, late-shift transportation can be improved through increased funding, new public policy and innovative service,” said Paul P. Skoutelas, APTA President and CEO.

Public transit providers face several challenges to running late-night service. This study showcases examples in Las Vegas, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Detroit, Boston, Battle Creek, MI, and North Kingstown, RI, outlining innovative ways transit operators can address issues like maintenance, operating costs, service planning and more in order to expand existing systems and create new ones.

“More and more often, we are hearing from our area’s largest employers — hospitals, financial institutions and companies that have employees who don’t work the usual 9-to-5 — about the need for access to high-quality, around-the-clock transit service,” said Katharine Kelleman, CEO of Port Authority of Allegheny County. “Late-night or 24-hour service would drastically improve their ability to recruit and retain employees and allow us to offer more robust transportation options to all of our customers throughout the Pittsburgh region.”

“Detroiters are on the go, around the clock,” said Mark de la Vergne, Chief of Mobility Innovation for the Mayor’s Office of Detroit. “Adding 24-hour service to twelve core routes of DDOT’s network and piloting an innovative option like Night Shift demonstrates our ongoing commitment to addressing all of our customers’ needs.”

Some of the study’s proposed solutions for transit operators, business owners and policymakers include:

- Extend spans of service. Transit operators can make existing services more convenient and flexible by increasing operating hours.
- Establish programs dedicated to funding late-shift transit operations. Without new funding at the state and federal level, transit agencies are limited in their ability to expand services.
- Increase investment in transit system state-of-good-repair and shrink the backlog of deferred maintenance. Overall investment in transit infrastructure gives agencies more flexibility in their hours of service.
- Embrace innovative partnerships to meet late-shift mobility needs. Ride-matching services offer guaranteed rides home where fixed-route public transit might not be appropriate or attainable.
- Formalize frameworks to allow employers that benefit most to subsidize late-shift transportation. Create a standardized process for partnerships between transit agencies and the private sector will allow both to pool necessary resources to promote late-shift ridership and invest in more impactful public transit service.

“As we continue to upgrade and modernize our public transit systems with an eye to the future, we can’t afford to leave behind one of America’s fastest growing areas of the workforce,” said Skoutelas. “Innovation will drive new partnerships, and increased infrastructure investment will see public transit systems leading the way with increased ridership and enhanced operations during the late-shift, as well as during more traditional hours.”

Read the full [“Supporting Late-Shift Workers: Their Transportation Needs and the Economy”](#) study.

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The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is a nonprofit international association of 1,500 public and private sector organization which represent a \$71 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.