

# Public Transit and Social Responsibility: Homelessness

Leadership APTA Graduation

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# Public Transit and Social Responsibility: Homelessness



- 1) Why transit systems are attractive to homeless individuals
- 2) How agencies are balancing ridership and the homelessness epidemic
- 3) Biggest challenges for transit providers
- 4) Call to Action for the industry

**WHY ARE TRANSIT  
SYSTEMS ATTRACTIVE  
TO HOMELESS  
INDIVIDUALS?**

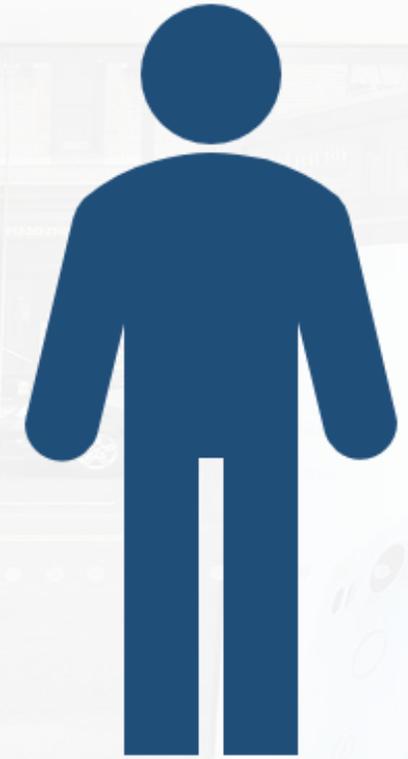
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FEDERAL LAW REQUIRES THESE SEATS BE MADE  
AVAILABLE TO SENIORS & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



# Transit Facilities Provide Basic Needs

- Shelters not always an option
- Police presence
- Food and clothing donations
- Public restrooms



**“Homeless individuals would rather be at transit facilities because they know they are protected by the police.”**

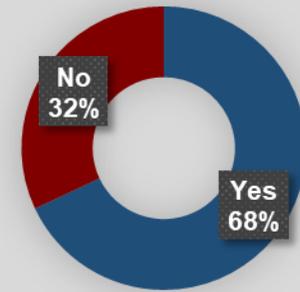
– Gary Denamen, New Jersey Transit Police Outreach Officer



# Survey Findings: Impact on Transit

- Homelessness is an issue that impacts nearly all agencies
- 78% say homelessness impacts ridership
- Desire for agencies to be a part of collective solutions

Do you believe transit agencies should play a role in addressing homelessness?



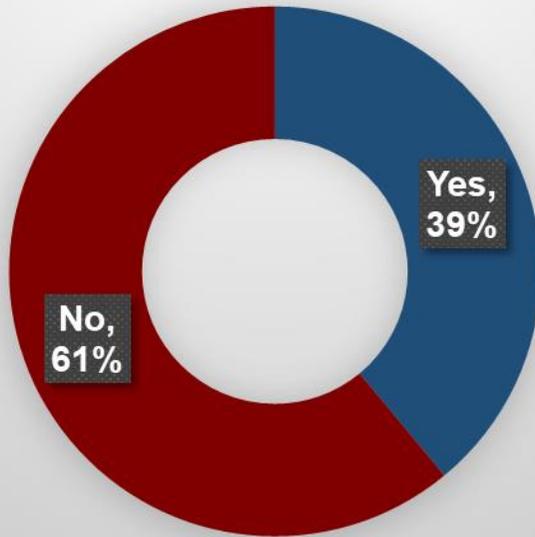
Two Different Viewpoints:

“Homeless individuals can make others feel uncomfortable, thereby deterring choice riders”

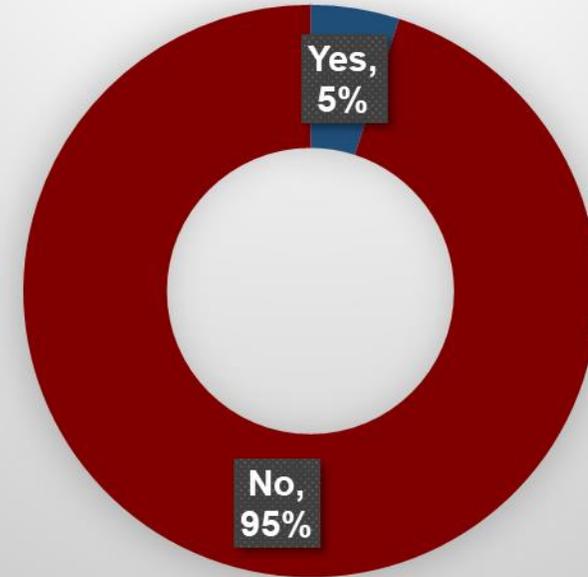
“Homeless individuals ride transit for shelter, thereby adding ridership”

# Survey Findings: Resources

Does your agency have a homeless outreach program or partner with any community organizations?



Does your agency have budget allocated for issues related to homelessness?





**WHAT ARE AGENCIES  
DOING TO BALANCE  
RIDERSHIP AND  
HOMELESSNESS?**

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# BART Police Crisis Intervention Training



Community Outreach Specialist Armando Sandoval providing contact information for available resources to a resident of a homeless encampment on BART property



# Pit Stop Restrooms



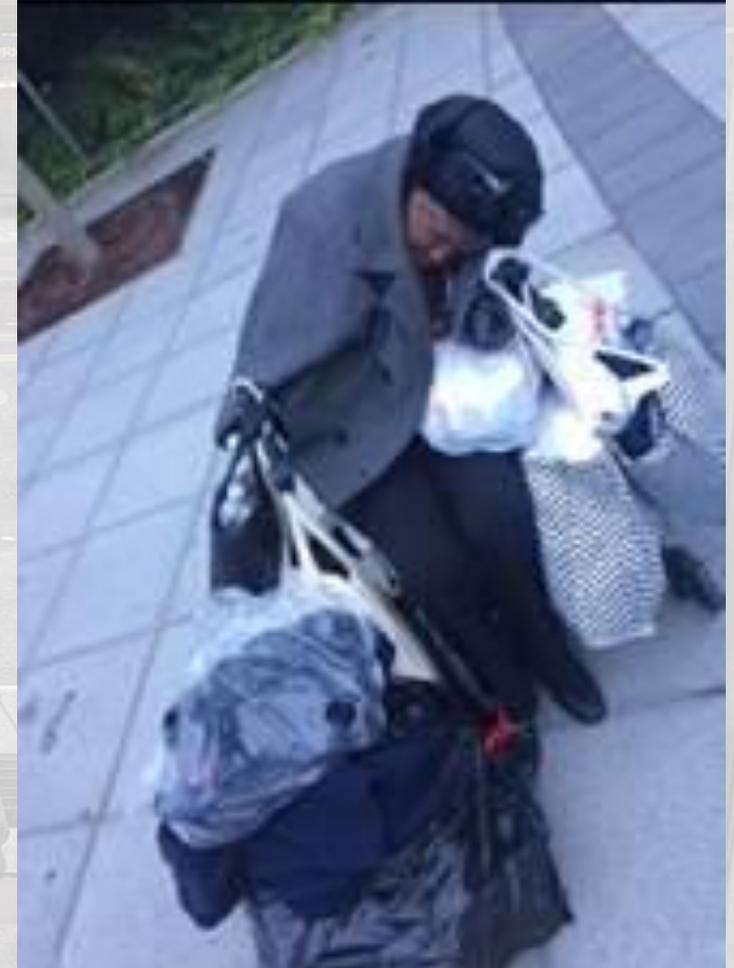
# New Jersey Transit: Crisis Intervention Officers

- New Jersey Transit Police Department (NJTPD) has two crisis intervention officers specifically to work with homeless individuals
- Partner with Volunteers of America and other social service organizations
- Includes a safe surrender partnership with the courts

# New Jersey Transit: Success Stories

Ms. Lillian McRae

- Regular at the Trenton Transit Center
- Refused social services many times
- NJTPD contacted Adult Protective Services and County Social Service office
- Planned Intervention
- Resulted in housing in a long term nursing facility



# Mid-Size Agency Strategies and Partnerships

## TARC (Louisville, KY) and Madison Metro (Madison, WI)

- Partnerships with social service agencies and homeless shelters to provide discount fare media
- Inclement weather strategies



Source: Wisconsin State Journal



**WHAT ARE THE  
BIGGEST CHALLENGES  
FOR TRANSIT  
PROVIDERS?**

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# Recognition of Responsibility: Why Should We Care as an Industry?

- Selling public transportation to areas beyond those currently served
- Ensuring the safety of customers and cleanliness of facilities
- Homelessness is projected to keep growing

# Providing a System that Supports the Entire Community

- “If we’re here for just the transit dependent population, we won’t be here for long. Addressing the homeless population is a must to maximize expansion opportunities.”

Gary C. Thomas, President/Executive Director, Dallas Area Rapid Transit

- “We must collect big data to tell the story of the human experience as it relates to homelessness.”

Curtis Koleber, CEO and Executive Director, CAT (Savannah, GA)

- “Match good intentions with adequate funding.”

Chuck Kamp, General Manager, Madison Metro (Madison, WI)

Call to Action



# Call to Action

- 1. Treat all individuals with dignity and respect. Serve the entire community including homeless individuals.**
- 1. Incorporate outreach officers with law enforcement to connect individuals with services.**
- 1. Align transit service with social service destinations to help ensure services are received.**

# Call to Action

- 4. Partner with local municipalities & the private sector to identify funding opportunities**
- 5. Develop creative solutions that do not require funding such as hiring a homeless individual for an entry level position.**



