



SPRING 2019

RURAL MOBILITY IN AMERICA

CONNECTING MILLIONS WITH APPROPRIATE ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSIT

Rural America’s transportation gap profoundly hurts rural Americans. Some 19% of Americans live in rural areas. That’s 62 million people. A quarter of them are veterans, and another quarter are seniors over 65. In ‘Flyover Country,’ 1.6 million people have neither a car nor access to public transit, shutting them off from life’s necessities—jobs, fresh food, education and, most importantly, healthcare. Often they need to travel great distances to VA hospitals or other centers for care unavailable in their hometowns.

Amtrak’s National Network, with its 15 long-distance routes connecting a series of state-supported services, provides an essential transportation service to 40 percent of the nation’s small and rural communities, establishing a vital link between Small Town and Big City America.

INCREASING SAFETY IN TRANSPORTATION

PUBLIC TRANSIT IS A SAFER ALTERNATIVE TO DRIVING FOR RURAL COMMUTERS.

19%

The percentage of Americans who live in rural communities.

33%

How many more miles rural residents drive than urban residents.

49%

The percentage that rural fatalities accounted for out of the total number of traffic fatalities nationwide.



ENHANCING ECONOMIC GROWTH

RAIL, BUS OR ON-DEMAND SERVICES CONNECT RURAL COMMUNITIES TO A GREATER REGION.

- Allows access to non-farming jobs and reducing government assistance rolls.
- Increases tourism and travel to rural recreation.
- Opens rural communities to consideration of high-tech industrial jobs.
- Provides access to higher education and vocational training.
- Entrepreneurial start-ups are more common in rural areas and have a higher five-year survival rate. (Source: The Conversation)
- Rural communities dependent on recreation fare better than rural communities dependent on agriculture. (Source: USDA Economic Research Service)

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REDUCING SOCIAL & ECONOMIC INEQUITIES

PUBLIC TRANSIT INCREASES OPPORTUNITIES, EDUCATION AND WAYS OUT OF POVERTY.



7%

How much more rural Americans spend on transportation despite living at a higher poverty rate. (Source: APTA)

\$4,000

The average cost of car ownership over and above the loan amount (Source: Nerdwallet)

1,200

Number of counties in the U.S. that have no access to public transportation. (Source: Population Reference Bureau)

18%

Percentage of Amtrak passengers that travel to or from a rural station with no access to air service.

25%

Percentage of aging Americans that live in rural America. (Source: Population Reference Bureau)

RURAL SUCCESS STORIES

HOW PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION CAN TRANSFORM RURAL COMMUNITIES

Amtrak Empire Builder

- Runs 2,200 miles from Chicago to Seattle/Portland with 45 intermediary stops, but only 9% travel from end-point to end-point.
- Is a lifeline to Native Americans, veterans, and the elderly living in the rural Northern Tier that gives them access to larger cities such as Spokane, WA and St. Paul, MN.
- Direct spending by non-residents in Montana traveling on the Empire Builder is approximately \$5.5 million, which creates .5 million in re-spending and 30 jobs.
- When Montana mayors were asked to what the effect of losing the Empire Builder would mean, all responded: “Devastating.”
- Rail Passengers found that a second Amtrak train between Chicago and Minneapolis/St. Paul would bring \$25 million annually for the state of Minnesota, 8-10x the cost to operate the new service.
- Rail Passengers also found that the overall economic benefit for three states of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois would be \$47 million annually—a return on investment of better than seven-to-one—much of which would flow to small towns along the route.

Community Development

- **Meridian, MS**, with 39,000 residents on the Mississippi/Alabama line, invested \$7.5 million in a new Amtrak Intermodal Station. Over \$200 million has been invested within 3 blocks of the station in the last 20 years.
- **Normal, IL**, a town of 59,000, invested \$49.5 million as part of the first TIGER project in the U.S. Investment since 2004 in Normal and Bloomington has exceeded \$220 million.
- **Anniston, AL**, with a population of 22,000, received a TIGER grant in 2016 to expand its rail platform. The Chief Ladiga bike trail will connect to the train station in downtown Anniston and run for over 100 miles to Atlanta, making it the longest paved bike trail the U.S.

SW Chief

- A Rail Passengers study found that the Southwest Chief brings \$180 million in direct and indirect activity to Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico.
- Installing Positive Train Control along the three-state segment of the Chief will bring an additional \$135 million in temporary economic activity through construction, benefitting rural towns in KS, CO, and NM.
- If the plan to break up the Chief with a bus-bridge had gone through, 32 universities would have lost train service, 47 hospitals would have lost train service, and 130,000 auto trips would've been added onto roads four times more dangerous than the national average—for stretch of rural and small communities with the lowest median income across the entire corridor.

