

Transit Enables Economic Mobility & Saves People Money

In recent years, the ability for young people to achieve more than their parents has declined, in part because of the lack of reliable, affordable transportation. Compared to car ownership that includes insurance, repairs, parking, and gas that averages 13k a year, **transit is highly affordable and can be a key to moving up the social ladder.**

Transit Enables Economic Mobility:

- **Commuting time is the single strongest factor in escaping poverty.** If someone has a longer commute, their odds of moving up the social ladder are greatly reduced; even more so than crime, test scores, or the percentage of two-parent families in a given community.¹
- Investing in public transit strengthens a cost-effective network for commuters, children, and so many others to get where they need to go. **Riders can save over \$13,000 a year by using public transit over driving.**²
- **The average household spends 16 cents to every dollar on transportation.** 93% of this goes to buying, maintaining, and operating cars, **the largest expenditure after housing.**³
- The poorest fifth of Americans spend 40% of their income on transportation.⁴ **In metro Detroit, the average household spends 19.4% of their income on transportation.**⁵ It's recommended to spend only 10-15% of your budget on transportation.
- For refugees, **poor public transportation was identified as the No. 1 obstacle to self-sufficiency.**⁶



"About a quarter of my budget goes to transportation."

- Hector Solis, who doesn't own a car, relies on transit and rideshare to get around. While not cheap, he says it's much better than paying high car insurance rates.⁷



¹ Chetty and Hendren, "The Impacts of Neighborhoods on Intergenerational Mobility" 2015.

² APTA "Transit Savings Grow as Auto Costs and Gas Prices Increase", 2023.

³ Public Transportation Association "Public Transportation Facts", 2025.

⁴ The Greenlining Institute, "Mobility Equity Framework", 2018.

⁵ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Consumer Expenditures in the Detroit Metropolitan Area - 2022-23", 2024.

⁶ Diverse Elders Coalition, "Poor Public Transportation Can Be a Roadblock to the Everyday Needs of Arab-American Seniors", 2017.

⁷ WXYZ, "How some metro Detroiters have changed driving habits to cut costs", 2024.

Transit Gets People Where They Need To Go

Transit connects people to jobs, school, healthcare, community, and so much more. There are 77 transit agencies across Michigan, **providing 40 million rides a year statewide.**

Transit is Essential for:

- **Older Michiganders** who want their independence after retiring from driving
- **Persons with disabilities**
- **Low-Income workers**
- **Young people** who can't afford to drive
- People who'd prefer not to drive

Transit Benefits People Who Don't Ride:

- **Decreases traffic** and congestion
- **Makes roads safer** for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians
- **Lowers pollution** and helps Michigan meet our climate commitments
- Drives **economic development**
- We all depend on people who depend on transit



Public transit is at the heart of everything.

Unfortunately, transit is underfunded and under attack, leaving many people stranded without other options. But TRU is working to change this!

TRU is a nonprofit dedicated to bringing more and better transit to metro Detroit. We advocate, educate, and mobilize for transit and other affordable mobility options. For 25 years, we've been advocating for the right to get where you need to go, throughout Detroit and Michigan.

Learn more and get involved at DetroitTransit.org.

