



TRANSIT NEWS

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In Tough Economic Times, Public Transit Users Save More Than \$8,400 Per Household

WASHINGTON, DC – As American families look for ways to save more and maximize their budgets, riding public transportation is a fast and easy solution to save money on the cost of commuting.

According to the American Public Transportation Association’s (APTA) “Transit Savings Report” a person riding public transportation can achieve an average annual savings of \$8,481 per year by taking public transportation instead of driving, based on today’s gas prices and the average unreserved parking rate.

“In these difficult economic times, riding public transportation is an excellent way to stretch the family budget and save money,” said APTA President William W. Millar. “From a consumer’s perspective, the savings recouped by taking public transportation equates to getting your food for free and having an extra \$2,000 in your pocket.”

According to the Food Institute, \$6,111 is spent on food each year by the average family. In regards to parking, on average, according to the *2008 Colliers International Parking Rate Study*, the national average for the monthly unreserved parking rate in a city’s downtown business district is \$143. Over the course of a year, parking costs alone can amount to an average of \$1,720.

APTA’s “Transit Savings Report” calculates the monthly savings for public transit users at \$707 per month. This is based on February 5, 2009 gas price of \$1.907 as reported by AAA. Gas prices are up this month by 22 cents, but are still \$1.069 lower than last year.

The top 20 cities with the highest transit ridership are ranked in order of their transportation savings based on the purchase of a monthly public transportation pass and factoring in today’s local gas prices and the local monthly unreserved parking rate.*

Top Twenty Cities – Transit Savings Report

	City	Monthly Savings	Annual Savings
1	Boston	\$1,034	\$12,407
2	New York	\$1,030	\$12,365
3	San Francisco	\$955	\$11,462
4	Chicago	\$874	\$10,491
5	Philadelphia	\$859	\$10,305
6	Seattle	\$851	\$10,215
7	Honolulu	\$831	\$9,972

8	Washington DC	\$792	\$9,506
9	San Diego	\$768	\$9,220
10	Minneapolis	\$766	\$9,189
11	Cleveland	\$753	\$9,041
12	Portland	\$744	\$8,932
13	Denver	\$733	\$8,800
14	Baltimore	\$719	\$8,626
15	Los Angeles	\$701	\$8,416
16	Miami	\$685	\$8,220
17	Dallas	\$680	\$8,158
18	Las Vegas	\$669	\$8,031
19	Atlanta	\$667	\$8,008
20	Pittsburgh	\$626	\$7,517

*Based on gasoline prices as reported by AAA on 2/5/09.

Methodology

APTA calculates the average cost of taking public transit by determining the average monthly transit pass of local public transit agencies across the country. This information is based on the annual APTA fare collection survey and is weighted based on ridership (unlinked passenger trips). The assumption is that a person making a switch to public transportation would likely purchase an unlimited pass on the local transit agency, typically available on a monthly basis.

APTA then compares the average monthly transit fare to the average cost of driving. The cost of driving is calculated using the 2008 AAA average cost of driving formula. AAA cost of driving formula is based on variable costs and fixed costs. The variable costs include the cost of gas, maintenance and tires. The fixed costs include insurance, license registration, depreciation and finance charges. The comparison also uses the average mileage of a mid-size auto at 23.4 miles per gallon and today's price for self-serve regular unleaded as recorded by AAA at \$1.907 per gallon. The analysis also assumes that a person will drive an average of 15,000 miles per year. The savings assume a household gives up one car.

In determining the cost of parking, APTA uses the data from the *2008 Colliers International Parking Rate Study* for monthly unreserved parking rates for the United States.

To calculate your individual savings with or without car ownership, go to www.publictransportation.org.

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APTA is a nonprofit international association of 1,500 member organizations including public transportation systems; planning, design, construction and finance firms; product and service providers; academic institutions; and state associations and departments of transportation. APTA members serve the public interest by providing safe, efficient and economical public transportation services and products. APTA members serve more than 90 percent of persons using public transportation in the United States and Canada.