

# NATIONAL SERVICE AND OPERATING DATA

## Passengers

### Highlights.....

- 9.8 billion unlinked trips were taken in 2005. 59.7% were by bus, 28.6% by heavy rail, and 11.7% for all other modes combined.
- Average trip length was longest for vanpools at 33.9 miles. Commuter rail averaged 22.4 miles, paratransit 8.5 miles, ferryboat 6.0 miles, heavy rail 5.1 miles, light rail 4.5 miles, and bus 3.7 miles.
- 72% of trips are taken by those that are employed, 11% are students, and 7% are retired.<sup>1</sup>
- 7% of trips are by those 65 and older, 12.5% by those 19 and under, 33% by African Americans and 14% by Hispanics.<sup>1</sup>
- 59% of trips are work-related, 11% school-related, 9% shopping- and dining-related, 3% medically-related, 7% socially-related.<sup>1</sup>
- 20% are by those with household incomes below \$15,000, 46% by \$15,000-\$50,000 households, and 34% by those with incomes over \$50,000.<sup>1</sup>

The U.S. Federal Transit Administration requires that annual unlinked passenger trips and passenger miles data be collected or estimated by the predominantly large and medium-sized transit agencies participating in its National Transit Database. APTA supplements this with monthly data, which includes some smaller transit agencies not required to participate in the NTD.

**Unlinked Passenger Trips** is the number of passengers who board public transportation vehicles. Passengers are counted each time they board vehicles no matter how many vehicles they use to travel from their origin to their destination.

**Passenger Miles** is the cumulative sum of the distances ridden by each passenger.

**Average Trip Length** is the average distance ridden for an unlinked passenger trip by time period (weekday, Saturday, Sunday) computed as passenger miles divided by unlinked passenger trips.

### Number of People Using Public Transportation

All ridership data reported in this book relate to trips taken--not to people--because that is how data are collected and reported. The heavy use of passes, transfers, joint tickets, and cash by people transferring from one vehicle to another, one mode to another, and from one public transportation agency to another makes it impossible to count people. Only boardings (unlinked passenger trips) can be counted with any accuracy. At the largest public transportation agencies, even the number of boardings may be estimated for at least a portion of the ridership (e.g., free shuttle vehicles without fareboxes and light rail service using the "proof-of-payment" system).

### Historical Ridership Trends

Public transportation's popularity has been affected by changing social and economic forces. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, ridership grew steadily until the Great Depression. Between 1929 and 1939, people took fewer work trips and often could not afford to take leisure trips. During World War II, public transportation was the dominant mode on the transportation landscape. Ridership peaked in 1946, when Americans took 23.4 billion trips on trains, buses and trolleys.

After World War II, ridership experienced a decline due to inexpensive fuel and government policies favoring low-density suburban development and the sprawl created by the new interstate highway system. By 1960, ridership dropped to 9.3 billion trips, and it continued to decline to a low of 6.5 billion trips in 1972. Beginning in 1973, ridership started to increase, reaching 9.8 billion trips in 2005. Reasons for the increase include a strong economy and improved customer service. Also, higher levels of public and private investment in public transportation resulted from 1991 federal legislation and succeeding funding bills.

1. *A Profile of Public Transportation Passenger Demographics and Travel Characteristics Reported in On-Board Surveys*. Washington: American Public Transportation Association, 2007.

FIGURE 1: Major Trends of Public Transportation Ridership

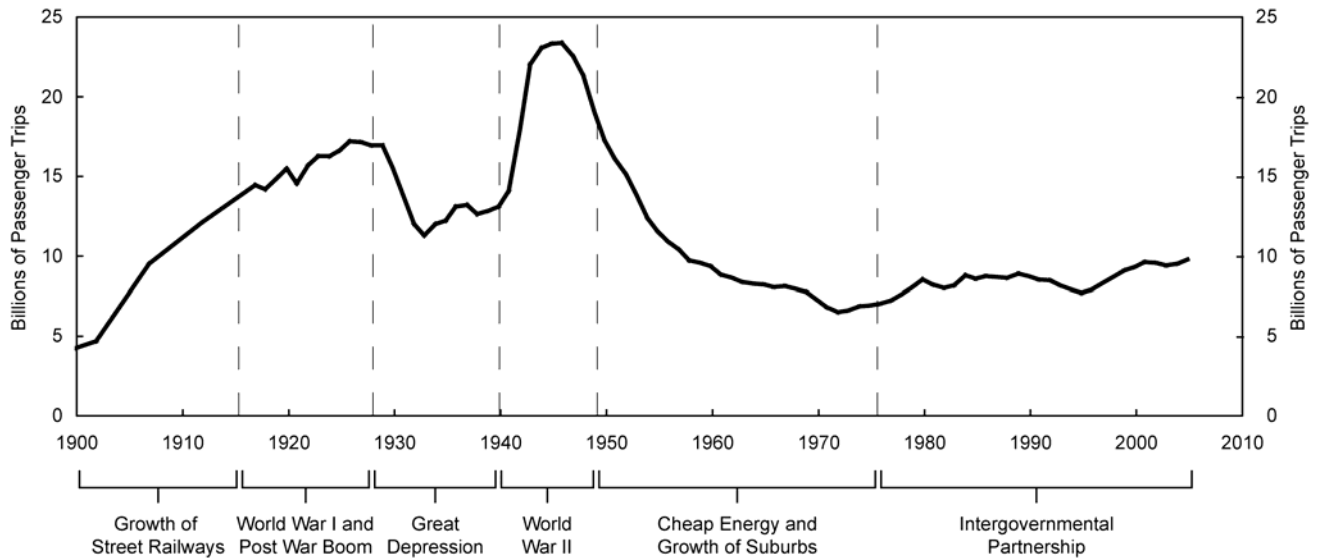


TABLE 6: Unlinked Passenger Trips by Mode, Millions

FISCAL YEAR	BUS	COMMUTER RAIL	PARA-TRANSIT	HEAVY RAIL	LIGHT RAIL	TROLLEY BUS	OTHER	TOTAL
1995	4,848	344	88	2,033	251	119	80	7,763
1996	4,887	352	93	2,157	261	117	81	7,948
1997	5,013	357	99	2,430	262	121	92	8,374
1998	5,399	381	95	2,393	276	117	89	8,750
1999	5,648	396	100	2,521	292	120	91	9,168
2000	5,678	413	105	2,632	320	122	93	9,363
2001	5,849	419	105	2,728	336	119	97	9,653
2002	5,868	414	103	2,688	337	116	97	9,623
2003	5,692	410	111	2,667	338	109	109	9,434
2004	5,731	414	114	2,748	350	106	112	9,575
2005 P	5,855	423	125	2,808	381	107	117	9,815
2005 % of Total	59.7%	4.3%	1.3%	28.6%	3.9%	1.1%	1.2%	100.0%

P = Preliminary

TABLE 7: Passenger Miles by Mode, Millions

FISCAL YEAR	BUS	COMMUTER RAIL	PARA-TRANSIT	HEAVY RAIL	LIGHT RAIL	TROLLEY BUS	OTHER	TOTAL
1995	18,818	8,244	607	10,559	860	187	533	39,808
1996	19,096	8,351	656	11,530	957	184	604	41,378
1997	19,604	8,038	754	12,056	1,035	189	663	42,339
1998	20,360	8,704	735	12,284	1,128	182	735	44,128
1999	21,205	8,766	813	12,902	1,206	186	779	45,857
2000	21,241	9,402	839	13,844	1,356	192	792	47,666
2001	22,022	9,548	855	14,178	1,437	187	843	49,070
2002	21,841	9,504	853	13,663	1,432	188	843	48,324
2003	21,262	9,559	930	13,606	1,476	176	893	47,903
2004	21,377	9,719	962	14,354	1,576	173	911	49,073
2005 P	21,825	9,473	1,058	14,418	1,700	173	1,033	49,678
2005 % of Total	43.9%	19.1%	2.1%	29.0%	3.4%	0.3%	2.1%	100.0%

P = Preliminary

**TABLE 8: Average Weekday Unlinked Passenger Trips by Mode, 2005**

MODE	AVERAGE WEEKDAY UNLINKED TRIPS	PER CENT OF TOTAL
Bus	20,067,000	59.7%
Commuter Rail	1,450,000	4.3%
Ferryboat (b)	225,000	0.7%
Heavy Rail	9,626,000	28.6%
Light Rail	1,304,000	3.9%
Other Rail (a)	114,000	0.3%
Paratransit	427,000	1.3%
Trolleybus	367,000	1.1%
Vanpool	61,000	0.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33,641,000</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

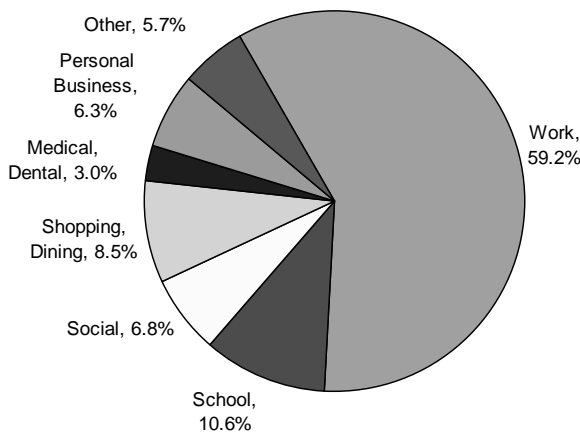
(a) Includes aerial tramway, automated guideway transit, cable car, inclined plane, and monorail.  
 (b) Excludes international, rural, rural interstate, island, and urban park ferries.

**TABLE 9: Average Unlinked Trip Length by Mode, 2005**

MODE	AVERAGE TRIP LENGTH (MILES)
Bus	3.7
Commuter Rail	22.4
Ferryboat (b)	6.0
Heavy Rail	5.1
Light Rail	4.5
Other Rail (a)	1.0
Paratransit	8.5
Trolleybus	1.6
Vanpool	33.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5.1</b>

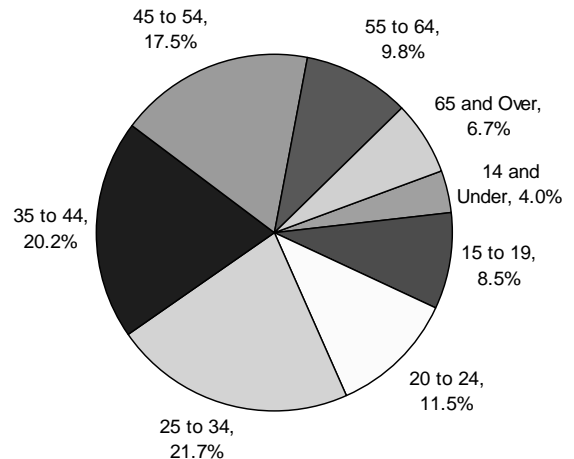
(a) Includes aerial tramway, automated guideway transit, cable car, inclined plane, and monorail.  
 (b) Excludes international, rural, rural interstate, island, and urban park ferries.

**Figure 2: Trip Purpose of Transit Passengers**



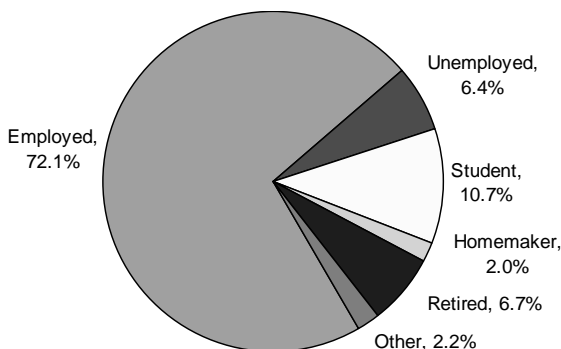
Source: APTA, Profile of Public Transportation Passengers, 2007.

**Figure 3: Age of Transit Passengers**



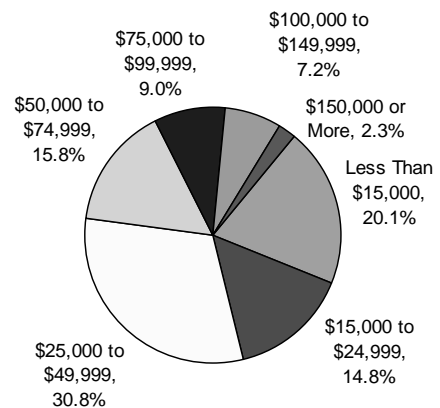
Source: APTA, Profile of Public Transportation Passengers, 2007.

**Figure 4: Primary Occupation of Transit Passengers**



Source: APTA, Profile of Public Transportation Passengers, 2007.

**Figure 5: Household Income of Transit Passengers**



Source: APTA, Profile of Public Transportation Passengers, 2007.

Figure 6: Ethnicity of Transit Passengers

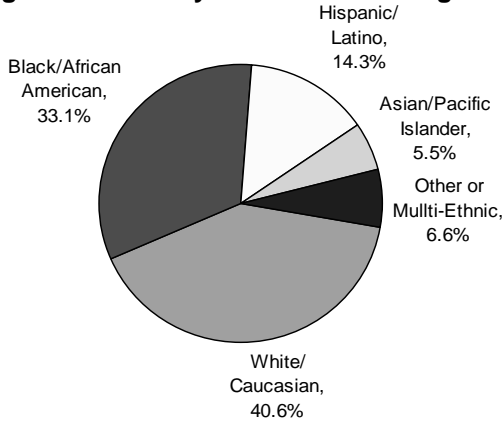
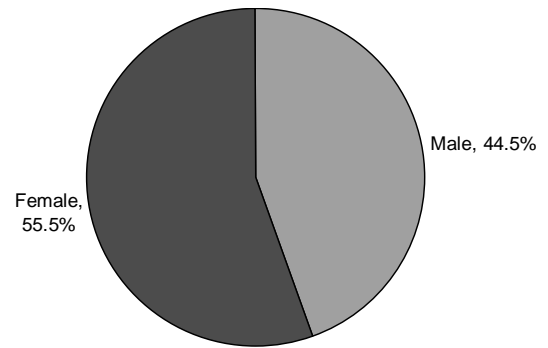


Figure 7: Gender of Transit Passengers



Source: APTA, Profile of Public Transportation Passengers, 2007.

Source: APTA, Profile of Public Transportation Passengers, 2007.

TABLE 10: Annual Unlinked Passenger Trips and Passenger Miles for Urbanized Areas Over 1,000,000 Population, Fiscal Year 2005 (Thousands) (a)

RANK (b)	URBANIZED AREA	UNLINKED TRIPS	PASSENGER MILES
1	New York-Newark, NY-NJ-CT	3,453,093.2	18,719,587.8
2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	666,052.4	2,981,188.2
3	Chicago, IL-IN	603,966.2	3,872,615.9
4	Philadelphia, PA-NJ-DE-MD	352,923.0	1,630,784.5
5	Miami, FL	158,502.1	805,932.5
6	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	82,019.8	485,825.7
7	Boston, MA-NH-RI	401,542.3	1,768,274.7
8	Washington, DC-VA-MD	461,502.8	2,194,836.2
9	Detroit, MI	47,558.5	266,707.2
10	Houston, TX	94,555.1	552,020.5
11	Atlanta, GA	150,252.4	810,928.3
12	San Francisco-Oakland, CA	418,383.6	2,282,678.2
13	Phoenix-Mesa, AZ	60,477.1	260,189.6
14	Seattle, WA	159,698.8	1,059,502.5
15	San Diego, CA	89,924.4	539,484.4
16	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN	81,021.8	393,472.1
17	San Juan, PR	81,914.8	352,972.7
18	St. Louis, MO-IL	48,902.3	285,731.8
19	Baltimore, MD	105,151.3	659,247.7
20	Tampa-St. Petersburg, FL	22,992.9	112,461.8
21	Denver-Aurora, CO	86,260.6	443,218.3
22	Cleveland, OH	66,610.2	293,165.8
23	Pittsburgh, PA	70,268.7	315,531.3
24	Portland, OR-WA	110,634.1	466,015.2
25	San Jose, CA	38,476.8	166,666.9
26	Riverside-San Bernardino, CA	23,322.4	127,861.3
27	Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	30,021.7	162,776.4
28	Virginia Beach, VA	24,241.5	107,836.4
29	Sacramento, CA	32,862.8	142,244.9
30	Kansas City, MO-KS	14,506.2	60,225.3
31	San Antonio, TX	40,696.6	180,631.6
32	Las Vegas, NV	53,571.4	195,125.4
33	Milwaukee, WI	53,096.4	157,875.9
34	Indianapolis, IN	8,810.2	44,226.2
35	Providence, RI-MA	20,175.2	98,573.8
36	Orlando, FL	24,807.6	160,205.6
37	Columbus, OH	14,789.5	60,281.9
38	New Orleans, LA	6,259.6	17,204.0

Source: Federal Transit Administration National Transit Database.

(a) Data for some areas may be understated since not all transit agencies report to the federal government. Data for some areas may be overstated since some transit agencies serve other urbanized areas and only agency-total data are reported.

(b) By urbanized area population in 2000 Census.