

Cars Beat Transit for Energy, CO₂, Cost, Time & Convenience

Cars Are Cheaper Than Transit

AAA says that the cost of driving is 59.2 cents per mile. Allowing for the fact that the average car has 1.6 passengers, the average cost per passenger-mile is 37 cents. This is a highball number based upscale AAA member's car costs, not the USA average.

The cost for an average car is around 27 cents.¹ Data from AAA: <http://exchange.aaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Your-Driving-Costs-2015.pdf> (see reverse side for excerpt)

TriMet reports that it carried 503,665,413 fixed route passenger-miles at a cost of \$356,366,424. This is 71 cents per passenger-mile (82 cents for bus; 53 for light rail), about double the actual cost of driving an upscale car and does not include the high construction expense of light rail which would add another 33 cents (local cost only), making light rail=86 cents. (<http://trimet.org/about/pdf/trimetridership.pdf>)

Cars Use Less Energy

The Transportation Energy Data Book shows cars use 3,144 BTU per- passenger-mile and "Transit Buses" use 4,071, 29% more. Data from http://cta.ornl.gov/data/tebd34/Edition34_Chapter02.pdf Table 2.14. See reverse side for excerpt (Also see table 2.15)

Cars Emit Less CO₂ Than Buses

The US Government says CO₂ emissions are related to BTUs at 157.2 lbs CO₂ per million BTU for Gasoline and 161.3 for Diesel. <https://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.cfm?id=73&t=11>

Cars Save Commute Time

Based on data from the American Community Survey, commute to work on transit takes about twice as long as driving a car. The average car commute was found to be 25.2 minutes while the average transit commute was 48.1 minutes. Interestingly commute to work time was about the same for

¹ The AAA shows Operating cost per mile at 17 cents for a Medium Sedan. The ownership costs work out to be 41 cents for 15,000 annual miles. About 25 cents of that is depreciation of the new car. Assuming depreciation on the average USA car is only 5 cents, and an added 5 cents for maintenance, the cost of driving would be (59-15)/1.6 or 27 cents per passenger-mile.

drivers whether they lived in suburbs or cities.

Data from: <http://www.debunkingportland.com/commutetime.html>

Cars Are More Convenient

Your car is usually a few steps away in your garage (or within a short walk of your front door) compared to several blocks away for transit, or ¼ mile for light rail.

Your car takes you when you want to go instead of being a slave to a bus schedule. There is no waiting for the bus in 100 degree heat or 0 degree cold. There is no exposure to criminals on the way to, or at, the bus stop.

You can make many stops on your way, unlike transit which involves a long wait for a bus after each stop.

When shopping, you can load up a weeks (or month's) worth of groceries in your car, or carry a day or two's worth of groceries on, the sometimes crowded bus.

And you NEVER have to stand up, jammed cheek to cheek with strangers, in your car

For older people driving is much easier than using transit - there is little walking involved and little exposure to crime or the elements. See: <http://www.debunkingportland.com/elderly%20travel.html>

A Pew research poll found cars are rated as the most needed item. <http://www.debunkingportland.com/carsnecessary.html>

Compared to buses,

- Cars use less energy,
- Cars emit less CO₂,
- Cars are faster,
- Cars are cheaper,
- Cars are more convenient,
- Cars are easier to use than transit which is especially important for older people and handicapped people.

Cost Data

AAA Average Costs Per Mile

miles per year	10,000	15,000	20,000
small sedan	58.2 cents	44.9 cents	38.0 cents
medium sedan	75.9 cents	58.1 cents	49.0 cents
large sedan	93.3 cents	71.0 cents	59.5 cents
composite average*	75.8 cents	58.0 cents	48.8 cents

From: <http://exchange.aaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Your-Driving-Costs-2015.pdf>

TRIMET SERVICE AND RIDERSHIP INFORMATION

Key Indicator	FY2014	FY2015
<i>Passenger Miles</i>		
Bus	281,560,398	292,447,584
MAX (Train)	215,992,720	207,225,540
WES	4,308,191	3,992,289
Fixed Route:	501,861,309	503,665,413
LIFT/Cab	10,169,280	10,000,738
Total System:	512,030,589	513,666,151
<i>System Costs (3)</i>		
Bus	\$241,853,086	239,296,772
MAX	\$107,545,626	110,177,107
WES (4)	\$6,795,549	6,892,515
Fixed Route:	\$356,194,261	\$356,366,424
LIFT/Cab	\$36,381,205	37,079,468
Total System:	\$392,575,466	\$393,445,892

Reformatted from: <http://trimet.org/about/pdf/trimetridership.pdf>

Energy Data

Table 2.14
Passenger Travel and Energy Use, 2013

	Number of vehicles (thousands)	Vehicle-miles (millions)	Passenger-miles (millions)	Load factor (persons/vehicle)	Energy intensities		Energy use (trillion Btu)
					(Btu per vehicle-mile)	(Btu per passenger-mile)	
Cars	113,676.0	1,446,000	2,241,300	1.5	4,873	3,144	7,046.6
Personal trucks	106,018.4	1,032,554	1,899,899	0.0	6,446	3,503	6,655.4
Motoreycles	8,405.0	20,366	23,625	1.2	2,871	2,475	58.5
Demand response^a	68.6	1,565	2,171	1.4	16,898	12,182	26.4
Buses							204.1
Transit	71.7	2,425	22,306	9.2	37,442	4,071	90.8
Intercity ^c							32.8
School ^e	720.3						80.5
Air							1,599.1
Certificated route ^d		5,512	579,944	105.2	253,190	2,406	1,395.5
General aviation	199.9						203.6
Recreational boats	13,706.6						245.0
Rail	20.2	1,452	39,053	26.9	66,008	2,455	95.9
Intercity (Amtrak)	0.5	319	6,810	21.3	45,205	2,118	14.4
Transit	12.4	774	20,381	26.3	63,265	2,404	49.0
Commuter	7.3	359	11,862	33.0	90,407	2,737	32.5

Table 2.14 from http://cta.ornl.gov/data/tebd34/Edition34_Chapter02.pdf