

We Need Transit for Healthy Communities

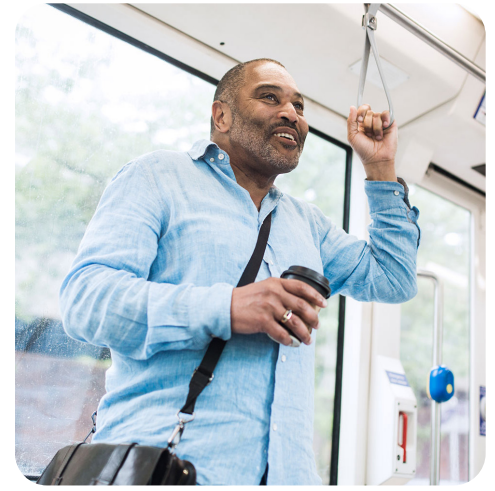
Our current transportation system puts our health at risk. Transit is a key solution.



Our health is more than just medical care: our individual and collective health is largely determined by where we live, work, play, and grow. These factors are known as social determinants of health.¹ Access to reliable and affordable transit impacts these social determinants—shaping our health and wellbeing. Transit can improve our individual and collective health by reducing air pollution created by motor vehicles, creating more access to basic needs including food, healthcare, and employment, by reducing social isolation, and increasing physical activity.

- > **Motor vehicle injuries are the leading cause of injury deaths among children and young adults.**² Access to a quality transit system means more people can get where they need to go without driving. With driver error as a leading factor in up to 93% of crashes³, access to transit can protect everyone, and especially our children and young adults: you can't crash a car you aren't driving.
- > **3.6 million people in the U.S. do not obtain medical care due to transportation issues.**⁴ We all should be able to access medical care when we need it. Inadequate transit disrupts people's ability to receive medical care, especially those who are not able to drive.
- > **Motor vehicles contribute to more than 50% of air pollution in urban areas⁵—and with no realistic horizon in sight to replace most gas-powered vehicles, we need other solutions.**^{6, 7, 8, 9} Air pollution impacts our respiratory health and our ability to breathe¹⁰, putting our health at risk. On average, a transit user produces less than half the pollution per mile of a driver.¹¹ Our continued over-reliance on car infrastructure leads to significantly increased air pollution.
- > **Lack of transportation, and especially lack of transit access, impacts access to food.**¹² Transportation remains one of the top barriers in accessing food. Without a vehicle or access to public transit, communities with few or no grocery stores must rely on limited food options at convenience stores as their main food source.¹³ A high-quality transit system allows people to have access to a wider range of grocery stores and food options.
- > **Without access to transportation, the jobs that we can access—and the healthcare coverage that comes with them—are extremely limited.** Car commuters have access to more jobs than public transit commuters.¹⁴ This lack of access has implications for both social determinants of health—like ability to afford adequate housing, quality education, or food—as well as healthcare implications, given that a higher-than-national-average 60% of Minnesotans rely on their employer for healthcare coverage.¹⁵
- > **Low levels of physical activity are associated with \$117 billion in health care costs every year.**¹⁶ We need communities with better transit to promote physical activity¹⁷—and reduce risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and several cancers.¹⁸ Transit use is directly linked to an increase in physical activity.¹⁹

Our transportation system results in hundreds of billions of dollars in crashes, air pollution and physical inactivity, and healthcare related costs.²⁰ Money spent on improving transit can significantly reduce healthcare costs. Supporting transit and improving our transportation systems result in healthier lives for all.



Sources

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- 2 *Why Public Health and Transportation*. Dannenberg, A. L., & Sener, I. N. (2015). <https://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/trnews/trnews299feature.pdf>
- 3 *Traffic Safety Fundamentals Handbook*, Minnesota Department of Transportation (June 2015). <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/stateaid/trafficsafety/reference/2015-mnd-ot-safety-handbook-large.pdf>
- 4 *Determinants of Health Series: Transportation*. American Hospital Association (n.d. retrieved March 1, 2022). <http://www.hpoe.org/resources/ahahret-guides/3078>
- 5 *Healthy Places—Respiratory Health and Air Pollution*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d., retrieved March 1, 2022). <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/airpollution.htm>
- 6 *Rewiring America Handbook*, Griffith, Saul (July 2020). <https://www.rewiringamerica.org/policy/rewiring-america-handbook>
- 7 *Alternative Fuels Data Center*, U.S. Department of energy (June 2021). <https://afdc.energy.gov/data/10962> There are currently 10,380 electric vehicles registered in the State of Minnesota.
- 8 *Motor Vehicle Registrations, by vehicle type and state*, U.S. Department of Transportation (2018). <https://datahub.transportation.gov/Roadways-and-Bridges/Motor-Vehicle-Registrations-by-vehicle-type-and-st/hwtm-7xmz> There are currently 5,404,277 registered vehicles in Minnesota, making electric vehicles less than .02% vehicles in the state.
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- 13 *Access to Foods that Support Healthy Eating Patterns | Healthy People 2020*. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d., retrieved March 1, 2022). <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health/interventions-resources/access-to-foods-that-support-healthy-eating-patterns>
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Move Minnesota leads the movement for an equitable and sustainable transportation system that puts people first. We are passionate about connecting communities, ending the climate crisis, expanding access to jobs and resources, and improving daily life for Minnesotans of all ages, races, incomes, and abilities. Learn more at movemn.org.

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