

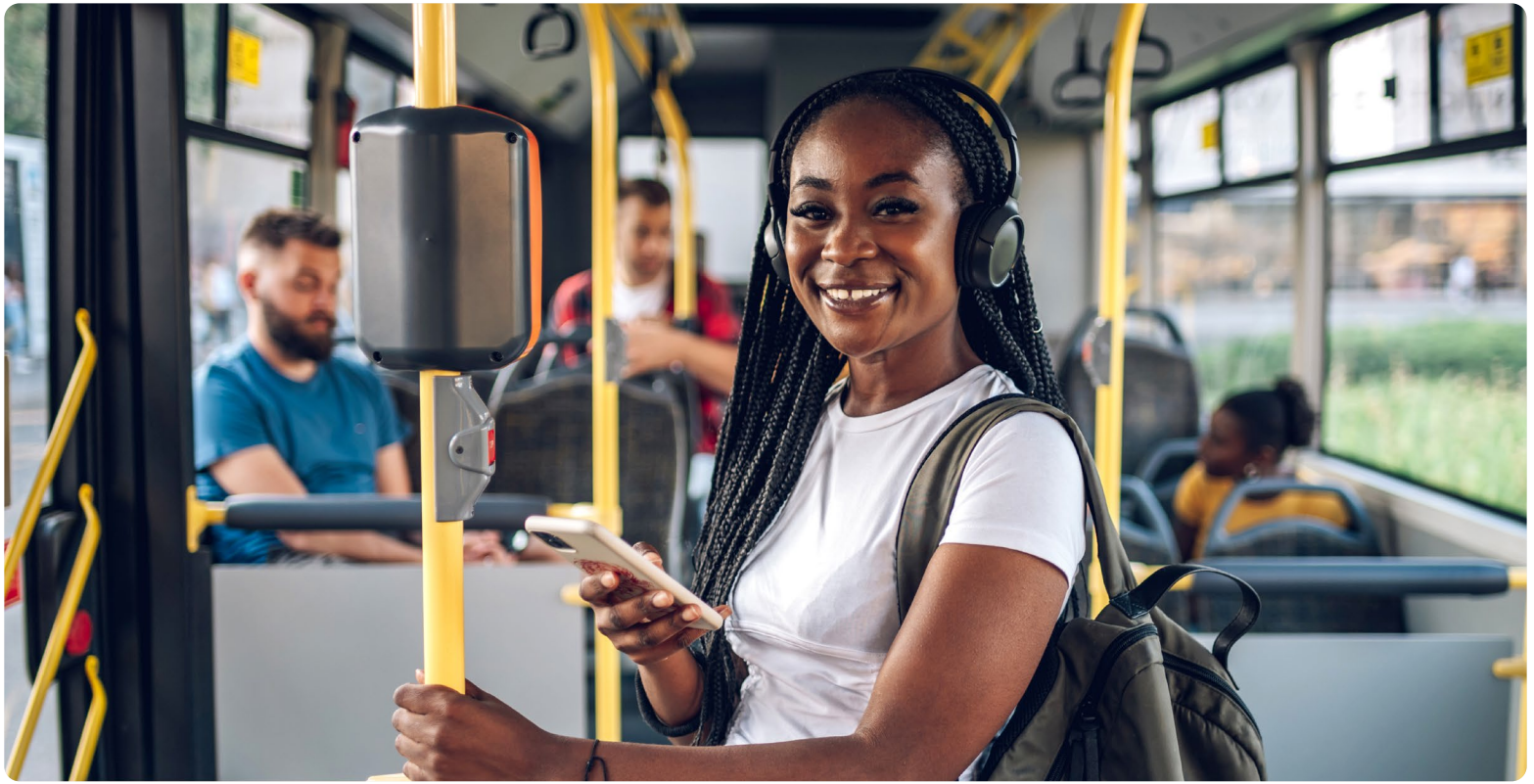


# Perceptions of Public Transit in the Twin Cities

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## Minnesotans believe in access, options and affordability when it comes to public transit

Across race, age and geography, **Twin Cities residents agree:** Everyone should have the freedom to get around in sustainable, affordable, and healthy ways.

A new poll from Data for Progress and Move Minnesota reveals that 83% of Twin Cities adults believe that having **robust public transit options is good** for everyone, and a strong majority **personally know someone who benefits** from using the current system. More than 60% of residents already consider public transit for certain trips, like attending major events, and nearly 1 in 5 say they have never used public transit but would like to.

The report underscores that driving is still the most common way of getting around, with 81% of respondents saying they regularly use a personal vehicle to get around. But 63% agree it's expensive to own a car and rely on their vehicle because of **habit, convenience, reliability and travel time**. Thanks to new investments from the regional sales tax, the public transit system is evolving to meet these travel needs with faster, more frequent buses and more routes.

As we invest in the transformation of our public transit system, now is the time to engage and inspire more residents to get on board. Our new polling report provides insight on how we can **capitalize on common beliefs and amplify the ways public transit is improving to better meet the needs of our daily lives**.

# Finding 1

## More than 90% of Twin Cities residents agree that everyone should have transportation choices

Transportation has a major impact on whether or not Twin Cities residents can get to work and school, buy groceries, visit the doctor, and connect with friends and family. Our poll shows that Twin Cities residents recognize that mobility options are essential to our daily lives. Respondents believe that it is important for themselves (78%), family and friends (83%), their neighbors (84%), and **everyone in the Twin Cities (93%) to have access to transportation choices to get around.**

Most respondents also appreciate that public transit is essential to saving families money, improving access to resources, reducing traffic on our streets, and protecting our collective health. More than 80% of Twin Cities residents agree with these statements.

Whether they personally ride public transit or not, the majority of respondents (55%) know someone who **personally benefits from using public transit.** Underscoring the equity implications of our current transportation system, nearly **three-quarters of Black residents (74%)** said they know someone who benefits from public transportation, while only half (51%) of white residents do. Potentially pointing to the next generation's desire to avoid car ownership, younger people also know more public transit users, with 64% of 18 to 34-year-olds saying they know someone who benefits from it, compared to 36% of people over 60.

87%

"Everybody should be able to get where they need to go, even if they don't own a car."

83%

"Having robust public transit options in the Twin Cities is good for everyone and can give people of all backgrounds more choices in where they want to go and how they want to get there."

83%

"By using public transit, Twin Cities residents can save money and avoid or reduce the costs of gas and car maintenance."

81%

"Better public transit in the Twin Cities can reduce traffic, speeding up commute times and providing more options for people to get around."

80%

"When Twin Cities residents take public transit or ride a bike instead of driving, they keep our roads, air, and water clean and keep public health a priority."

## Finding 2

### Nearly 1 in 3 Twin Cities residents are already using public transit — and nearly two-thirds consider it for certain trips

From saving money to safeguarding our climate, using public transit has many benefits, and **many Twin Cities residents are already on board**. In our poll, 33% of respondents say they currently ride the bus and 41% said they have used the bus in the past. A similar trend holds for light rail and trains: 30% of respondents use them now and 35% have used them in the past. And there's interest in the wider community: nearly one in five respondents (17%) have never taken public transit but say they "would like to."

#### Somewhat likely to use public transit to:



**65%** Attend major events



**58%** Travel downtown



**56%** Go to the airport

Right now, for many day-to-day activities like running errands (63%) and commuting to work or school (46%), most people say they are unlikely to choose public transit. But that doesn't hold true for all trips. In fact, a majority of Twin Cities residents say they are at least somewhat **likely to consider using public transit to attend major events** (65% likely), **travel downtown** (58% likely), and **go to the airport** (56% likely). Again, our poll reveals the racial disparities in mobility, with **Black residents being more likely to consider public transit** in every case compared to other racial and ethnic demographics.

## Finding 3

### While acknowledging the drawbacks, Twin Cities residents overwhelmingly use personal vehicles to get around

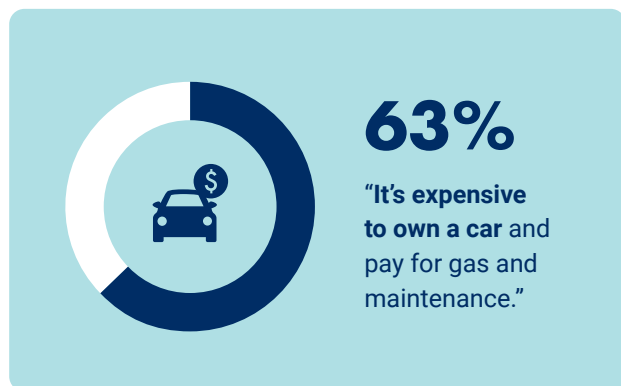
For decades, lawmakers have funneled our tax dollars into car-centric infrastructure investments and the auto industry has poured billions of dollars into propping up positive myths associated with car travel and negative perceptions of other transportation options. Unfortunately, it shows: By far the most-used form of transportation in the Twin Cities is personal vehicles, with **81% of residents regularly or occasionally using a personal vehicle to get around**. Why? A full 85% agree that "traveling by car is the fastest option" and 81% say "I'm used to driving or having someone drive me where I need to go."

But access is unequal. For instance, **while 81% of white residents say they own a personal vehicle, just 51% of Black residents do**. White respondents also use personal vehicles at much higher rates than Black respondents: 87% of white respondents say they regularly or occasionally use personal vehicles, while 56% of Black respondents say the same. Vehicle ownership also increases with age: only 67% of residents aged 18 to 34 own a vehicle, while 74% of residents aged 35 to 59 and 89% of residents 60 or older do.



**81%** of residents regularly or occasionally using a personal vehicle to get around

Car-dependency comes with a cost, though. In our poll, 63% of respondents emphasize that **“it’s expensive to own a car and pay for gas and maintenance.”** Indeed, according to AAA, owning and maintaining a car in 2023 cost an average of \$12,182 annually. At the same time, 62% of respondents acknowledge that “public transit near me is affordable.” So why aren’t more people opting to ride the bus or train?

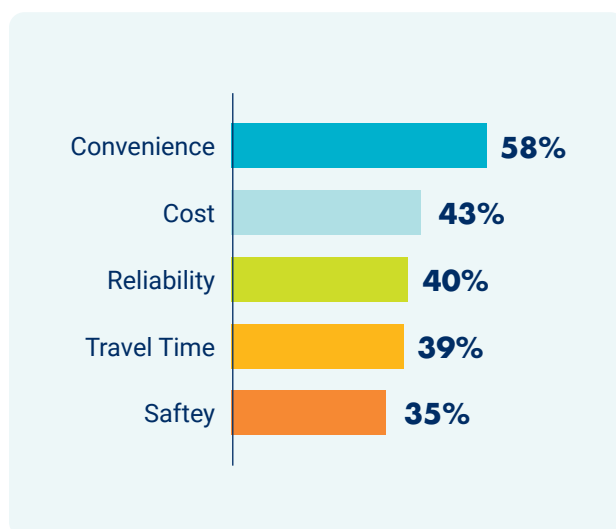


## Finding 4

### Convenience, safety and reliability are key to expanding public transit use

Changing our collective transportation habits is like a puzzle with many pieces. Reducing car trips is only possible if we make other options, like public transit, convenient and affordable, while also making our communities more connected.

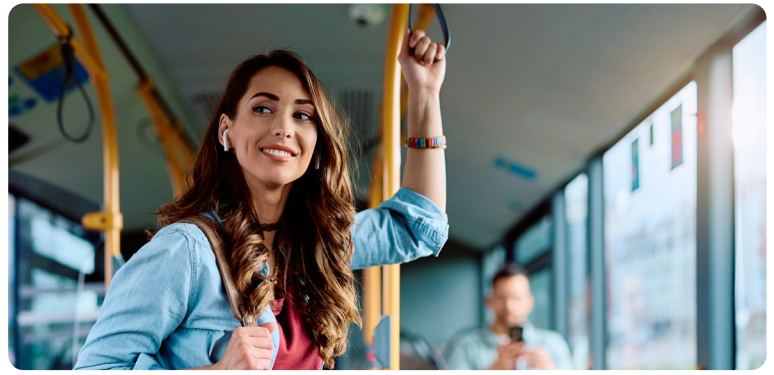
Right now, when Twin Cities residents choose how to get around, **convenience (58%), cost (43%), reliability (40%), travel time (39%), and safety (35%)** are most important. For people who have never taken public transit, convenience rates even higher (61%) as a top factor in their decision making.



When specifically asked about factors that would make them more likely to use public transit, 65% say more convenient train and bus stops and 64% say more frequent train and bus service. Notably, 80% of Black respondents say more affordable train and bus options would increase their likelihood of using public transit, while only 57% of white respondents say the same.

**Safety is also a significant consideration:** 69% of respondents say safer trains and buses would increase their likelihood of using transit, with 39% of women and 45% of conservatives saying it is a top priority (compared to 31% of men and 29% of liberals).

What **resources** do Twin Cities residents need to make different decisions about their daily transportation? Poll respondents say that “online schedule, cost, and route information” (43%), “tools to map your trip” (32%) and “free routes, cost comparison, and reduced price options” (32%) would be the most helpful.



## Conclusion

This latest survey clearly shows that Minnesotans value a public transportation system that is affordable, safe and accessible to everyone regardless of their background, race or economic status.

In 2023, Minnesota made history by [passing the most ambitious transportation bill in the United States](#) and [securing long-term funding for public transit in the Twin Cities](#). This poll reflects the values of Twin Cities residents and their commitment to investing in public transit. By prioritizing these transformative resources, we have the opportunity to improve and expand access to safe and convenient travel experiences and invite residents to explore and utilize all of their transportation choices.

Our poll amplifies the role transportation could play in reducing pollution, removing disparities and meeting the desires of the majority of Minnesotans who want a diversity of options beyond traditional car ownership. The public message is clear: that even if you own a car, having more public transit options is good for everyone and an expression of our shared values.

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## Survey Methodology

*From June 27 to July 3, 2025, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 1,003 adults in the Twin Cities metropolitan area using SMS and web panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of Twin Cities adults by age, gender, education, race, geography, voter registration and recalled presidential vote. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error associated with the sample size is  $\pm 3$  percentage points. Results for subgroups of the sample are subject to increased margins of error. For more information, please visit [dataforprogress.org/our-methodology](https://dataforprogress.org/our-methodology).*