



Safety+Health

The Official Magazine of the NSC Congress & Expo

Public transportation is 10 times safer for commuters, analysis shows

December 27, 2018



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Washington — A “modest” increase in public transportation use could help reduce traffic-related fatalities significantly, according to an [analysis](#) recently issued by the American Public Transportation Association and the [Vision Zero Network](#).

Using data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Federal Transit Administration, researchers found that metro areas where residents average more than 40 bus or

train trips a year have about half the traffic fatality rates of metro areas where residents average fewer than 20 trips annually.

The 11 metro areas with the highest transit use averaged 5.8 traffic deaths per 100,000 residents. The average for the United States' 108 largest metro areas – all with populations greater than 500,000 – was nearly 10 traffic deaths per 100,000 residents.

“Every day 100 people die due to traffic crashes on America’s roads, and increasingly communities are committing to Vision Zero because they believe that everyone deserves to be safe on our streets,” Leah Shahum, founder and director of the Vision Zero Network, said in an Aug. 29 press release from APTA. “Investing in strong public transit systems helps communities improve safety for everyone on the roads.”

The analysis highlights some of the ways public transit can help reduce traffic-related fatalities, such as decreasing the number of high-risk drivers on the roads.

“Since most casualty crashes involve multiple vehicles, even responsible drivers who always observe traffic laws and never use public transit benefit from public transportation improvements that help reduce higher-risk driving, and therefore their risk of being the victim of other drivers’ mistakes,” the analysis states.

Overall, the analysis states, using public transit is 10 times safer than traveling by vehicle, while using commuter/intercity railroads is 18 times safer.