

# Invest \$600 Billion in Clean, Accessible Public Transit

to Address Climate Change and Build Thriving Communities



## 45%

OF AMERICANS  
CURRENTLY HAVE NO  
ACCESS TO PUBLIC  
TRANSIT

Addressing climate change and building thriving communities will require public investments in affordable, electrified mass transit that is accessible to everyone.

Electrifying the existing fleet of public buses - including 470,000 diesel school buses - and commuter rail across the country will require an investment of approximately **\$200 billion, according to analysis from Data for Progress**.



## \$500B

IN TRANSIT  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
REPAIRS NEEDED OVER  
THE NEXT DECADE

Since 1982, approximately **80 percent** of Federal transportation program funding has been allocated to highways and only 20 percent to public transit. In addition, the American Society of Civil Engineers has identified a **\$176 billion backlog of needed repairs to transit** infrastructure that is currently aging or in poor condition. Transportation for America has called for **\$500 billion over the next decade** to modernize transit. Finally, 45% of Americans currently have no access to public transit, and **expanding transit infrastructure to improve that access will require hundreds of billions of dollars** of public investment.

**These investments would slash greenhouse gas emissions, connect people to economic opportunities and improve public health.** Using public transit, people could get to more places – their jobs, their schools – in less time. Destinations that previously took too long to reach would become accessible.

## Public transit fights climate change.

The transportation sector is one of the biggest drivers of climate change: in 2019, **transportation accounted for 29 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions**. Preventing catastrophic climate change and achieving President Biden's climate goals will require rapidly expanding public transit while centering equity and environmental justice goals.



## 29%

U.S. GREENHOUSE  
GAS EMISSIONS  
COME FROM  
TRANSPORTATION

Replacing car trips with transit rides is one of the most effective ways to cut greenhouse gas emissions: changing an average American's daily commute from driving alone to using existing public transit could **cut their carbon footprint by 10% or more**. Fully electric transit systems replace diesel fumes & tailpipe emissions thus producing a **healthy climate**.



# 1.2M

JOBES COULD BE  
CREATED EVERY  
YEAR WITH A \$600B  
INVESTMENT



# 1M+

RURAL HOUSEHOLDS  
RELY ON LIMITED  
AND UNRELIABLE  
PUBLIC TRANSIT



# 60%

OF AMERICANS  
SUPPORT PROPOSALS  
FOR INCREASED  
PUBLIC TRANSIT  
FUNDING

## Transit creates good jobs.

Investment in transit has major amplifying effects; linking underserved communities to business districts, parks, and community hubs literally paves the way for green growth. One analysis estimates that every \$1 invested in public transit generates \$4 in economic benefits. Transit is already a critical engine powering the economy: more than 2,800,000 essential workers nationwide rely on public transit to travel to and from work.

Research from the University of Massachusetts Amherst suggests that a \$600 billion total investment in transit upgrades and electrification could directly create nearly 1.2 million jobs every year. Investments in public transit come with a strong return on investment for job creation, creating 70% more job-hours, dollar for dollar, than investments in highways.

## Investments in transit are investments in equity.

Low-income people rely on public transit more than wealthier individuals – but in most of the country, lower-income communities are not adequately served by public transit. More than 1 million rural households rely on public transit to get to jobs and essential services – but what transit options exist for them are limited, slow, and unreliable. Large-scale investments in public transit flip this unjust reality. As the former Mayor of Bogotá explained, “A developed country is not a place where the poor have cars. It’s where the rich use public transport.”

Across the country, access to public transit is also an indispensable lifeline for seniors and the disabled. Finally, pollution from cars and trucks is worse in lower-income communities and disproportionately in low-income communities of color, contributing to higher rates of asthma and other chronic cardiovascular illness.

## Improving public transit is popular.

The BUILD GREEN Act, proposed by Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey and Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Andrew Levin, calls for a \$500 billion investment in public transit. The Act has the endorsement of the nation’s leading environmental groups and dozens of congressional co-sponsors. Representative Chuy García and Hank Johnson have proposed amendments to the Surface Transportation Investment Act of 2021 that would fund equitable expansion and electrification of public transit systems nationwide.

Electrifying public transit and commuter rail, along with increasing funding for public transit to at least match funding for roads and bridges, are popular, with more than 60% of Americans in support, as shown in Data for Progress polling.