

SPRING 2018

# RURAL MOBILITY IN AMERICA

CONNECTING MILLIONS WITH APPROPRIATE ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSIT

Rural America’s transportation gap profoundly hurts rural Americans. Some 19% of Americans live in rural areas. That’s 62 million people. A quarter of them are veterans, and another quarter are seniors over 65. In ‘Flyover Country,’ 1.6 million people have neither a car nor access to public transit, shutting them off from life’s necessities—jobs, fresh food, education and, most importantly, healthcare. Often they need to travel great distances to VA hospitals or other centers for care unavailable in their hometowns.

In February 2018, President Trump unveiled an Infrastructure Plan supposedly aimed at rural infrastructure development. These communities could benefit from safer travel, economic growth and reduced economic and social inequality, if the Rural Infrastructure Program, or any plan truly supporting rural development and not half-measures, moves forward.

## INCREASING SAFETY IN TRANSPORTATION

PUBLIC TRANSIT IS A SAFER ALTERNATIVE TO DRIVING FOR RURAL COMMUTERS.

**19%**

The percentage of Americans who live in rural communities.

**33%**

How many more miles rural residents drive than urban residents.

**49%**

The percentage that rural fatalities accounted for out of the total number of traffic fatalities nationwide.



## ENHANCING ECONOMIC GROWTH

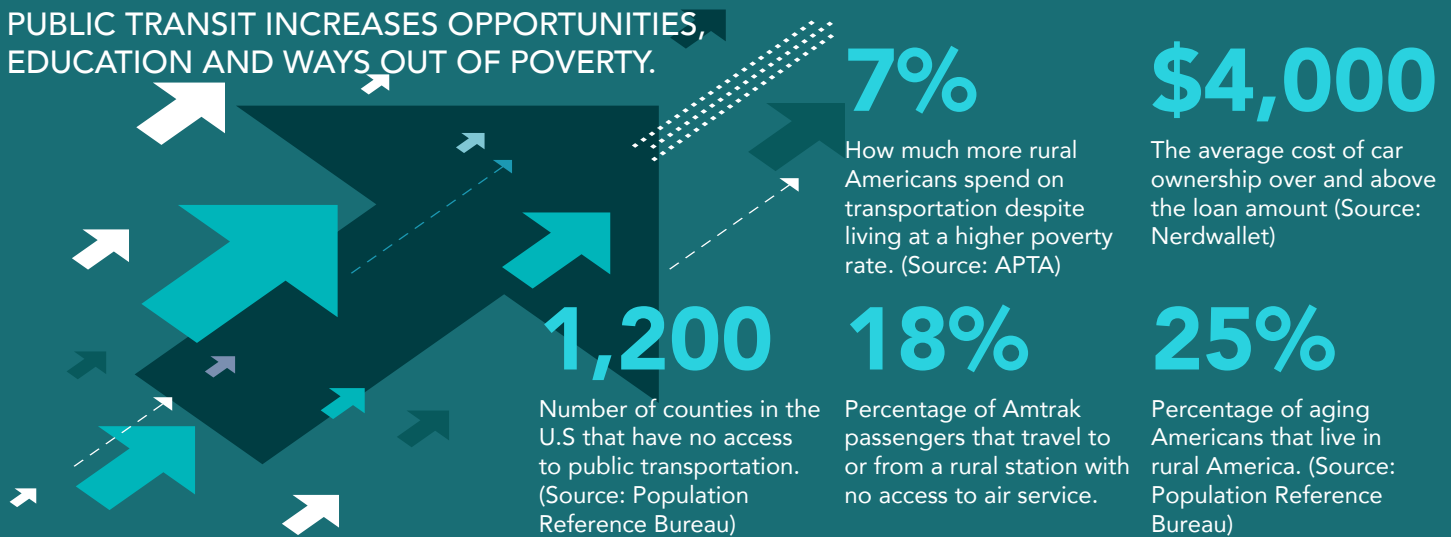
RAIL, BUS OR ON-DEMAND SERVICES CONNECT RURAL COMMUNITIES TO A GREATER REGION.

- Allows access to non-farming jobs and reducing government assistance rolls.
- Increases tourism and travel to rural recreation.
- Opens rural communities to consideration of high-tech industrial jobs.
- Provides access to higher education and vocational training.
- Entrepreneurial start-ups are more common in rural areas and have a higher five-year survival rate. (Source: The Conversation)
- Rural communities dependent on recreation fare better than rural communities dependent on agriculture. (Source: USDA Economic Research Service)

“Rural communities dependent on recreation fare better than rural communities dependent on agriculture.”

## REDUCING SOCIAL & ECONOMIC INEQUITIES

PUBLIC TRANSIT INCREASES OPPORTUNITIES, EDUCATION AND WAYS OUT OF POVERTY.



## RURAL SUCCESS STORIES

HOW PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION CAN TRANSFORM RURAL COMMUNITIES

### Amtrak Empire Builder

- Runs 2,200 miles from Chicago to Seattle/Portland with 45 intermediary stops, but only 9% travel from end-point to end-point.
- Is a lifeline to Native Americans, veterans, and the elderly living in the rural Northern Tier that gives them access to larger cities such as Spokane, WA and St. Paul, MN.
- Tourists can easily access Glacier National Park and the surrounding areas all year.
- Direct spending by non-residents in Montana traveling on the Empire Builder is approximately \$5.5 million, which creates .5 million in re-spending and 30 jobs.
- When Montana mayors were asked to what the effect of losing the Empire Builder would mean, all responded: “Devastating.”

### Community Development

- **Meridian, MS**, with 39,000 residents on the Mississippi/Alabama line, invested \$7.5 million in a new Amtrak Intermodal Station. Over \$200 million has been invested within 3 blocks of the station in the last 20 years.
- **Normal, IL**, a town of 59,000, invested \$49.5 million as part of the first TIGER project in the U.S. Investment since 2004 in Normal and Bloomington has exceeded \$220 million.
- **Anniston, AL**, with a population of 22,000, received a TIGER grant in 2016 to expand its rail platform. The Chief Ladiga bike trail will connect to the train station in downtown Anniston and run for over 100 miles to Atlanta, making it the longest paved bike trail the U.S.
- **York, AL** is developing as an “Arts Destination.” It is located on the Crescent line between Tuscaloosa and Meridian and would benefit from a stop being added to boost tourism.
- **Webb County, TX** operates a fixed-route and on-demand transit service that has provided 150 people access to jobs contributing \$17 million to the local economy.

