



# Renewing Texas Infrastructure

## 2012 Texas Infrastructure Report Card

### Texas Section – American Society of Civil Engineers



## Transit Fact Sheet

### Key Infrastructure Facts: Existing Condition and Performance

- Public transportation includes all multiple occupancy vehicle services designed to transport customers on local and regional routes. The majority of these services in Texas include: private and public buses; vanpools; demand response services; heavy and light rail; commuter rail; and ferryboats.
- Transit providers in Texas can generally be classified into four categories based on population size or federal funding received:
  - Large Urban Systems or Metropolitan Transportation Authorities (MTA) provide public transportation to Texas' seven largest urbanized areas. MTAs serve urban areas with a population of over 200,000. They are organized under State law and granted dedicated taxing authority. The seven Texas cities in which MTAs operate are Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio. Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) is often listed with the MTAs due to its similarities to the MTAs; however, it is a Coordinated County Transportation Authority in an urbanized area serving the "collar" counties adjacent to counties with populations of 1,000,000 or more, which includes Denton County. DCTA was successful in obtaining a sales and usage tax in 2004 for the cities of Denton, Highland Village and Lewisville.
  - Urbanized Areas – Smaller urbanized transit operators (a total of 30 in 2010) provide service to urban areas with a population between 50,000 and 200,000. In 2010, every urbanized area in Texas had some level of public transportation.
  - Non-urbanized or rural operators (a total of 38 in 2010) serve those areas with a population of less than 50,000. In 2010, only one rural county in Texas, Newton County, did not have rural public transportation service.
  - Other transit systems provide service for the elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities (a total of 115 district systems in 2010), Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program (a total of 27 distinct systems in 2010), and New Freedom program (a total of 9 distinct systems in 2010). Many urban and rural providers also provide the above specialized services as part of their regular service. Distinct systems tend to be private non-profit corporations, public for-profit entities, or not-profit corporations.
- In 2010, every county in Texas had some form of public transportation providing over 271 million one-way passenger trips traveling over 237 million miles.
- Texas continues to provide financial support to national and Texas-based Intercity Bus carriers. Additionally Texas supports transit planning in each Metropolitan Planning Organization and 24 planning regions representing all 254 counties.
- Rail Transit is provided to Texas commuters in Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin and Galveston; as well as service from Denton County to the DFW Metroplex.
- The Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex ranked fifth nationally, and Houston ranked 6<sup>th</sup> nationally, in congestion in the 2011 Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) Urban Mobility Report.

- Capital Metro in Austin and “The B” in Corpus Christi provide reduced fares on “Ozone Action Days” in an effort to improve air quality. Capital Metro also provides one of the largest publicly-operated ride share programs in the country; they also initiated the first passenger rail line in Austin in March 2010.

## **Anticipated Growth and Other Future Needs**

- Work is the most popular public transportation destination, with 59.2% of all trips commuting to and from workplaces. Next, 10.6% of trips go to schools; 8.5% to shop; 6.89% to social visits; , 5.1% personal business, 2.7% to medical appointments, and 5.7% other trips.
- Regular-route public transportation service on buses and trains provides a significant amount of peak-period travel in the most congested corridors and urban areas in the U.S. If public transportation service had been discontinued and the riders traveled in private vehicles in 2010, the urban areas nationwide would have suffered an additional 796 million hours of delay and consumed 300 million more gallons of fuel. The value of the additional travel delay and fuel that would have been consumed if there were no public transportation service would be an additional \$16.8 billion, a 17% increase over current congestion costs in the same urban areas.
- For every \$1 billion invested in public transportation capital and operations, an average of 36,000 jobs is supported. These 36,000 jobs result in roughly \$3.6 billion of business sales and generate nearly \$500 million in federal, state and local tax revenues.
- Short and long term economic benefits result in the effect that for every \$1 invested in public transportation, \$4 is generated in economic returns.

## **Adequacy of Current Funding and Need for Expanded Funding**

- Texas is heavily dependent upon federal funding to develop Light Rail Transit.
- In 2010, Federal Funding appropriations for Public Transportation in Texas totaled more than \$610 million, an increase from \$479 million in 2009.
- Public transportation systems receive federal and state funding through various programs and from various agencies. Most often funding is administered by, including but not limited to, the Federal Transit Administration, the Texas Department of Transportation, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, as well as others.
- The Houston METRO Solutions Transit System Plan, approved by referendum on November 4, 2003, provides for system expansion through the year 2025. The first phase began construction in 2008 and continues today.
- Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) 2030 Transit System Plan includes doubling the size of their Light Rail Transit system.
- The Texas Mobility Fund can be used to develop and fund other mobility options, including public transportation.
- Local governments would like the ability to use their sales tax to fund transit by removing the sales tax cap.
- Development and/or enhancement of public transportation is often difficult because it requires substantial amounts of monies. The resources of government (federal, state and local) have not kept pace in meeting the capital and operating needs necessary to accomplish this. These limited resources, primarily used to maintain established systems, significantly constrain efforts to expand and/or establish new systems in areas that are currently not served or underserved particularly due to population growth. In addition, the transit systems located in areas adjacent to the United States/Mexico border realize an additional burden placed on their resources due to transient populations from the Mexico sovereignty. Likewise, systems are expecting increasing

demands as the population continues to age and urban areas become increasingly congested, at the same time the costs of building and expanding services are increasing.

## Sources

- *Houston METRO* – [www.ridemetro.org](http://www.ridemetro.org)
- *2010 Texas Transit Statistics*, Texas Department of Transportation, ([https://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/ptn/transit\\_stats/2010.pdf](https://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/ptn/transit_stats/2010.pdf))
- *2011 Urban Mobility Report*, Texas Transportation Institute, September 2011 ([mobility.tamu.edu](http://mobility.tamu.edu))
- Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) – [www.dart.org](http://www.dart.org)
- Capital Metro of Austin – [www.capmetro.org](http://www.capmetro.org)
- Input from the Public Transportation Division, Texas Department of Transportation, March 2012.