



Management & Operations

86% of Americans support Fed funding for public transportation

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Overwhelmingly, Americans believe the government should help fund public transportation, according to a new HNTB Corp. THINK survey.

Image: HNTB

Almost nine in 10 Americans, 86%, believe government should help fund public transportation, according to the findings of a new HNTB Corp. America THINKS national public opinion survey. While this belief is held most strongly among Americans living in urban areas (92%), 85% of suburban respondents, as well as 79% of those living in rural areas agree.

According to the survey, [Public Transportation in the U.S.-2018](#), support for government funding of public transportation encompasses every age group with 93% of millennials, 85% of Generation X respondents, 80% of baby boomers, and 61% of seniors in agreement. In addition, Americans across the nation support government funding for public transportation, including 87% in the Northeast, 85% in the South, 83% in the Midwest, and 88% in the West.

The HNTB survey defined public transportation to include ride-sharing services such as taxis, car/limousine services, carpools and vanpools, online car services like Uber or Lyft, bus/bus rapid transit, subways, streetcars/light rail systems, and commuter rail systems.

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“Americans recognize the value and benefits of public transportation, and believe government funding is essential to build and maintain a public transportation system that delivers quality service,” said Kim Slaughter, HNTB national transit/rail sector leader and sr. VP. “It is remarkable the extent to which people across the nation, living in every type of community setting and across all age groups agree. Transit agencies and elected officials should take particular note of the support among younger segments of the population, and recognize they are increasingly in the majority as consumers of public transportation, as well as voters and taxpayers.”

The survey also found that more than eight in 10 Americans (83%) currently have access to some form of public transportation. For these Americans, the most prevalent option is bus and bus rapid transit available to 78% of respondents, closely followed by ride sharing at 74%. Commuter rail, streetcars/light rail and subways were next at 24%, 22%, and 14%, respectively.

A majority of Americans (52%) believe the single most important benefit public transportation should offer is to help those who are not able to drive.

Among those Americans with access to some form of public transportation, two in three (66%) have used it at some point, according to the HNTB survey. The survey found a majority of Americans (52%) believe the single most important benefit public transportation should offer is to help those who are not able to drive, with 62% of baby boomer respondents and 69% of seniors in agreement. Providing a safer way to travel was cited by 32% of respondents, while 31% cited more convenience access to everyday amenities.

Almost half (49%) of respondents with access to public transportation are interested in services that use different transportation modes for door-to-door travel, with a single payment for their entire trip. This capability was of greatest interest to urban respondents (64%) as well as 64% of millennials.

The desire to live near public transportation continues strong according to the survey, with 65% of respondents reporting their interest has either increased or remained the same, compared to 66% of respondents in HNTB's [2016 America THINKS survey](#), [Transit Oriented Development in America](#).

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