

CLOVIS CITY COUNCIL MEETING

September 8, 2025

6:00 P.M.

Council Chamber

Meeting called to order by Mayor Mouanoutoua at **6:01**

Flag Salute led by Mayor Pro Tem Pearce

Roll Call: Present: Councilmembers Ashbeck, Basgall, Bessinger, Mayor Pro Tem Pearce
Mayor Mouanoutoua

Mayor Mouanoutoua requested a moment of silence in honor of former Fresno State President and CSU Chancellor Joseph Castro following his recent passing.

PRESENTATION – 6:03

6:03 – ITEM 1 - Presentation of Proclamation Declaring September 2025 as National Service Dog Month.

6:08 – ITEM 2 - Presentation by the Fresno Chaffee Zoo.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – 6:18

Mayor Mouanoutoua noted for the record that 24 public comments were received regarding the Clovis Senior Center and the Dance Instructor, as well as one comment from Joseph Thomason.

Brian Wilson, resident, requested that the City Council issue a proclamation designating the Clovis on Tour book as the official children's book of Clovis and inquired about the creation of an Advisory Committee for Seniors.

Steven Quick, father of the late Caleb Quick, spoke to raise awareness of the negative impacts of Proposition 57 and invited the Council to attend an event on October 11, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in River Park.

Comments were received regarding the Clovis Senior Center, Dance Floor Instructor, and Personnel from Sharon Foster, Dr. Bernie McPherson, Peggy Bridges, Debbie Graeber, Nelly Sanchez, Unknown resident, Mary Bracci, Henry Wegermann, Barbara Collins, Lesley Haywood Unknown resident, Jim Ray, Philip Flick, Vince Prince, Lee Minyard, Corina, April, Christina Palmer, and Belinda Jones. Speakers expressed support for bringing back the Dance Floor Instructor and personnel at the Senior Center.

Hans Kam, resident, spoke regarding the need for pickleball in Clovis.

Comments were made to place "In God We Trust" in the Council Chambers. Spoke in support: Bill Scott, Kathy Reinhardt, Kay Errotabere, Brian Wilson, and Eric Rollins. Spoke in opposition: Dr. Jeni-Ann Kren.

CONSENT CALENDAR – 7:40

Upon call, there was no public comment.

Motion by Councilmember Ashbeck, seconded by Councilmember Bessinger, that the items on the Consent Calendar be approved. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

3. Administration - Approval - Minutes from the September 2, 2025, Council Meeting.
4. Administration – Approval – **Res. 25-95**, Approving an agreement between the City of Clovis and the Fresno County Transportation Authority for Measure C Funded Environmental Enhancement Program – Transit Oriented Development Subprogram Cycle XIII Funds for the 135 Osmun Senior Apartments Pedestrian Sidewalk Connection Project, in the amount of \$427,714 in grant funds; and authorizing the City Manager, or designee, to execute the Agreement, any amendments, and any related documents thereto, as may be necessary to participate in the Program; and Approval – **Res. 25-96**, Amend the 2025-2026 Community Investment Program Budget for Street Improvement Fund, to include Osmun Senior Apartments Sidewalk Project in the amount of \$427,714.
5. Administration - Approval - A Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Subrecipient Agreement with Marjaree Mason Center for \$59,578 in 2025-2026 CDBG funds; and Authorize the City Manager to execute the CDBG Agreement, and any amendments thereto, for the provision of services to domestic violence survivors.
6. Finance – Receive and File – Investment Report for the Month of April 2025.
7. Finance – Receive and File – Treasurer’s Report for the Month of April 2025.
8. Finance – Receive and File – Investment Report for the Month of May 2025.
9. Finance – Receive and File – Treasurer’s Report for the Month of May 2025.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – 7:40

- 7:40 ITEM 10 - Consider Approval – **Res. 25-97**, Adoption of the City of Clovis 2024-2025 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for expenditure of Community Development Block Grant Funds and Authorize submittal to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Upon call, there was no public comment.

Motion for approval by Councilmember Ashbeck, seconded by Councilmember Bessinger. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS – 8:02

- 8:02 ITEM 11 - Workshop - Real Time Information Center Introduction.

Eric Rollins, resident, asked about funding and training for officers to utilize the new tools in the Clovis Police Department.

COUNCIL ITEMS – 8:35

8:35 ITEM 12 - Consider – Update on Advance Clean Fleet and Innovative Clean Transit regulations; and Approval of submittal of a Comment letter to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) on the Regulations.

Mike Prandini, resident, spoke regarding the impact on residents and transit riders and inquired about the cost and potential new transit fees to residents.

Motion for approval by Councilmember Bessinger, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Pearce. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS – 8:53

City Manager Haussler announced upcoming park tour stops at San Gabriel Park, Pasa Tiempo Park, and Dry Creek Park through September; 9/11 Run to Remember and 9/11 Ceremony; reported the first General Plan Advisory Committee meeting on September 11th; announced ClovisFest at the end of September; noted that the community survey has been distributed to a sample group of residents; and acknowledged the Garnet Fire and the public resources responding to it.

COUNCIL COMMENTS – 8:54

There was consensus of the City Council to send a letter of opposition regarding Proposition 50.

There was consensus of the City Council to place an item on a future agenda to discuss and consider displaying “In God We Trust” in the Council Chambers, with the understanding that it would be privately funded.

There was consensus of the City Council to prepare a proclamation designating the official City of Clovis children's book.

CLOSED SESSION – 9:14

Upon call, there was no public comment.

ITEM 13 - GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54957.6 CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS AGENCY DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVES: ANDREW HAUSSLER, PAUL ARMENDARIZ, AMY HANCE, BETHANY BERUBE, SCOTT CROSS EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONS: CLOVIS PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATION AND TRANSIT EMPLOYEES BARGAINING UNIT

RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION AND REPORT FROM CLOSED SESSION

No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Mouanoutoua adjourned the meeting of the Council to September 15, 2025.

Meeting adjourned: 10:03 p.m.



Mayor



City Clerk





Public Comment for September 8, 2025

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 10:42 AM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Beverly Trenhaile

Email = bevtrenhaile@gmail.com

Comment = Please bring Jim Ray back to us dancer's! We are devastated! He is a good person and we looked forward to his classes and Friday night dances! Jim is the highlight of our lives both mentally and physically! Please 🙏

Client IP = 73.2.58.224

Public Comment for September 8, 2025

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 11:55 AM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Barbara L. Johnson

Email = barbara8380@sbcglobal.net

Comment = I support hiring back Jim Ray for Western Dance Instructor. He is a great teacher. He is very patient and encouraging to his students. Jim has many years of experience. The Senior Center needs someone who teaches couples dancing and line dancing for seniors.

Client IP = 108.227.93.121

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 11:43 AM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-04

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Lois R Hodgson

Email = lois_hodgson@hotmail.com

Comment = We do not want to lose Jim Ray. We have the right to be accommodated. He brings great joy and positivity to our lives. Pulling me from my home to get back out and join the world again.

Client IP = 72.250.177.3

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 2:18 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Cynthia Johnson

Email = csjohnson1979@sbcglobal.net

Comment = I am in support of Jim and Debbie still leading the line dancing class that he has put his heart and soul into over the last many years. He is an awesome teacher, patience and very sensitive to the older students. Please let him return to his passion.

Client IP = 97.191.110.249

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 2:46 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Deborah Hamrick

Email = Deborah.Hamrick@gmail.com

Comment = I am writing on behalf of Jim Ray and the cancellation of his line dancing classes at the Clovis Senior Center. Jim is the kindest most patient teacher I have ever encountered. I am asking you to please have him and his classes reinstated immediately!

Client IP = 76.114.20.161

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 2:47 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Mary Bracci

Email = mbracci925@aol.com

Comment = Please please please bring Jim Ray back as a dance instructor at the Community Center. We want him back!

Client IP = 97.205.46.162

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 2:50 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Jeanean Brown

Email = jeanean_brown@verizon.net

Comment = I am supporting Jim Ray and ask that he be reinstated as instructor at the Clovis Senior Center. I am a three year student of Jim and I quickly knew he was and is invaluable to the community. He is the epitome of "Clovis-A Way of Life". As a resident of Clovis, we need to protect and preserve our values, our heritage, and all that makes Clovis unique. Jim Ray has the character, values, and dedication to Clovis as displayed by his passion for teaching and giving back to the community for over 30 years. Everyone in dance knows and respects Jim. He is a valuable asset to our community. We need to do whatever we can to keep him here at the Senior Center. The center is more than just a group of students- it is itself a community where we can learn, feel safe to share experiences, and be welcomed by people who have the same interests. This doesn't just happen. Jim Ray created this environment in his classes. Ask around Clovis and you'll find that he is loved and respected. As well as having taught generations of students how to dance, have fun, and feel confident. Losing Jim Ray would be losing a member of the family. Our family.

Client IP = 73.90.148.50

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 3:06 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Philip Flick

Email = flickp07@gmail.com

Comment = Wondering how to get Jim Ray back as dance instructor. Hear that Tammy will be instructing on Wednesday nights, but what about the couples dance lessons which fall on Monday evening for intermediate class and Sunday and Friday begging class. Also what about Friday night open dance from 7 to 10? Jim has instructed there for close to 30 years and now the seniors lose something else with no replacement. Don't forget he also had two line dance classes during the day on Tuesday and Thursday. Many seniors will be missing not only great exercise, but more important, being with others and not sitting home alone.

Client IP = 98.41.102.97

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 3:23 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Dave Marquez

Email = thehammsbear@msn.com

Comment = Regarding the situation at the Senior Center involving line dancing/country dancing instruction. The venue for the dancing was perfect. Perfect size, perfect location, a perfect floor to dance on. How and why the Center can make a decision like this so fast, so unexpected, so undemocratic is beyond me. I may be a nobody but I feel that this decision should have required a vote or at least more time to come up with better solutions.

Client IP = 174.236.224.66

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 3:44 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Ricky and Barbara Collins

Email = rrcollinscc1@att.net

Comment = This is concerning Senior Center dance instructor Jim Rae. He has been instructing at the Center for 30 years or more. He was recently laid off by the administration. His classes bring many seniors to the Center and revenue. Now these seniors that have been in his class for many years have NO place to go for their exercise and dance instructions. He is a very kind, patient and friendly person. He encourages us to do better. He is a very talented person and great instructor. We want him back at the Center.

Client IP = 47.147.236.150

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 8:53 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Cindy Quintana

Email = woodstock70cq@gmail.com

Comment = The importance of dance in my life and how Jim Ray and his lessons have helped me physically, mentally and socially.

I have been going to Jim Ray's dance class for 12 years and it helps me physically to stay healthy it's my exercise twice a week. It also helps my social life where I like to go there to meet new friends and talk with my old friends.

My lung doctor says that it has helped my breathing since I have COPD and it helps build of my lungs. My primary doctor said to continue dancing as it was good exercise and good for my memory since I have to remember steps too different dances.

Jim is very patient and friendly with everyone, and takes the time to teach everyone the dance until they are comfortable with it. Each day there are different dances new and old.

Respectfully,
Cindy Quintana
Client IP = 73.116.109.15

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 5:25 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Rosa Reitzel

Email = ahrem31@gmail.com

Comment = I am 84 years old and have been taking dance classes with Jim Ray for at least 16 years. I am disappointed that the Senior Center management dismissed his concerns about the room we dance on. They are legitimate concerns. I wonder why the director and her staff took it as Jim Ray's territorial grab. Not only did they create a hostile environment during the meeting, but they gave him an absurd, insulting, and moronic solution to his concerns. Jim retired on the spot, a reaction that was fueled by anger and frustration. And the management gleefully accepted it on the spot, with no regard for professionalism or ethical deportment. And they did not, for a single moment, consider the effects of their decisions on the physical and psychological wellbeing of the line dancers, who are a big part of the population they are supposed to serve with compassion and dignity. I guess those sentiments are not part of their resumes. So, please allow Jim Ray to rescind his retirement. As a passionate teacher and dancer, he has a lot more to offer to this dancing community. Please don't allow personal prejudices mar the Clovis Way of Life, of which we are proud to be part of.

Client IP = 73.66.114.180

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Sunday, September 7, 2025 5:59 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Diane Suderman

Email = suderlady@yahoo.com

Comment = Having grown up in a culture where dancing was not allowed, and not having time to pursue it as an adult, I have been overjoyed to be able to learn to dance as a senior. Jim Ray is a big reason I have learned to dance. He creates an atmosphere of acceptance and fun while we work hard to learn the steps. Not only has dancing provided good exercise for me, but Jim has become a friend, as have the many people I've met at the dance classes. I take line dancing as well as the beginning couple's class. For me it is heartbreaking that just as I'm finally learning to dance, everything including the Friday Night Dances have been canceled. It's NOT fair! We need a safe floor, a full class schedule, and most of all our beloved Jim Ray! Please bring him back as soon as possible!!

Client IP = 174.208.161.252

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Sunday, September 7, 2025 12:09 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Jeff Giroux

Email = jgiroux15a@gmail.com

Comment = I'm writing in support of Jim Ray and the Senior Center's Line Dancing Program.

My mother, Elena Giroux, is 90 years old, a Clovis resident for over 30 years, and an avid supporter of Jim and the line dancing program. She worked for the city providing administrative support for the line dancing program for many years, and when her job was eliminated (I'd guess in about 2010) she continued to perform that function as a volunteer. She works roughly 4 days a week.

It is hard to discuss the line dancing program without talking about Jim. He is the life blood of the program, is patient and caring of all the dancers, and he is an enthusiastic coach and leader. I've spent several afternoons and evenings with Jim when I visit my mother, and I have seen this personally. He truly cares about this group of seniors. I can't imagine a more committed or effective leader.

The line dancing program is a very important part of my mother's life. Attending classes and her volunteer work with this group is her primary social interaction and connection to her community of friends every week. It gives her life purpose and a community. I think this is what motivates her most to stay healthy and active. As a 90-years old who lives independently, she manages to take care of so many aspects of her life on her own. It's remarkable for me to see. Without Jim's friendship and leadership of this line dancing community, she would not be as happy or healthy. It is that important to her well being.

I hope you will find a way to continue to support Jim and the Senior Center's Line Dancing Program for the good of Clovis and the senior community.

Client IP = 104.28.55.115

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Saturday, September 6, 2025 11:46 AM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Sharon Foster

Email = shoeshe55@yahoo.com

Comment = Would like to discuss Jim Ray dance instructor of the Clovis Senior Center for the past 30 years. Hoping to have him reinstated to that position. And the latest changes made to the floor.

Client IP = 108.205.160.107

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Saturday, September 6, 2025 8:59 AM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Rhonda Waters

Email = watersrhonda@gmail.com

Comment = I have been taking Jim Rays line dancing class for over 5 years. He is a dedicated and professional teacher, who treats his students with respect and kindness. He always ensures the safety of the class along with a fun time!! I have made lifelong friendships and learned hundreds of dances. I was very disappointed that he wouldn't be teaching anymore, since his dedication and all his hard work wasn't appreciated. I hope the council finds it in his favor to reinstate him

Client IP = 73.41.113.122

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Saturday, September 6, 2025 8:03 AM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Clovis Senior Activity Center Instructor

Email = lonewolf999@icloud.com

Comment = I work at the Senior Activities Center instructing multiple fitness classes during the week. I was verbally assaulted and attacked by a person that was in the center looking to rent the hall. My students had to come to my rescue to get these women off of me and stop the attack. When I reported it to Ashley and Bethany they laughed at me and told me I was too sensitive and that the incident was my fault because these women were VIP's and have the right to do and act however they please. I was told if I ever speak to anyone about what happened I would be fired. I have 25 witnesses to this occurrence that were students in my class at the time of the incident. I was told if I speak to any one of them to get witness reports to the violence, I would be terminated. City policy requires a report to be filed about any incident of violence in the workplace. Ashley and Bethany have refused to file this report and have vowed retaliation if I push the issue. I work everyday in fear of potential aggressors at work or aggression and retaliation from the management.

Client IP = 104.28.123.72

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Saturday, September 6, 2025 7:15 AM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Vince Prince

Email = vimceprince@comcast.net

Comment = regarding Jim Ray, Dance Instructor Clovis Community Center: What an amazing and wonderful representative of the Clovis Community! For 30 years he has dedicated his time and service to the those of us who desire to learn dance, stay active and remain vital! He is a true gentleman and professional with a passion for this endeavour. I am saddened to find out that he was insulted by staff over concern for the safety of his elderly dancers. Placing painters tape on the beautiful dance floor at the older community center would definitely endanger dancers. While expecting to slide over the floor as we do the tape would inevitably lift some edges exposing the stocky glue under surface and cause dancer/s to stick and fall down. Jim's concern for the safety of his students and seniors is well placed and he should have been taken seriously. The City Council should equally be concerned about the issue! It is a shame that Jim Ray was treated with indignity and disrespect! It will be a great loss to all of us whose social lives he fills with dance and happiness.

Client IP = 67.187.228.129

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Friday, September 5, 2025 9:37 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Sheila Poore

Email = sheila.poore70@gmail.com

Comment = We are heartbroken if we lose our dance teacher, I can't see another person taking Jim's place. Jim was so patient with the Seniors and was willing to show us the dance steps over and over. Please reconsider your decision, Jim wants to be our teacher.

Client IP = 73.151.52.131

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 11:25 AM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Lori Leshner

Email = L.Leshner@att.net

Comment =

I'm writing to express my thoughts on the Senior Center's new management's recent actions regarding the western dance instructor, Jim Ray, and the beautiful wood floor at the old Senior Center.

Every time I see the Clovis flag with the cowboy on it I think of Jim. He is Clovis! He has devoted 30 years to teaching western dancing to the community. People love him! I'm sad that the City of Clovis employees laughed at Jim and would not listen to his concerns about the painters tape on the floor being a safety hazard. It's unthinking that they did not work with him to come up with a solution that would benefit everyone.

The wood floor is absolutely beautiful and a jewel in heart of Clovis. It's more than a wood floor, it's a place where friendships are made. It's the Clovis Way of Life!

My family has been in the Clovis.area for over 125 years. They were here when Clovis had only dirt roads! My family loves Clovis. Thus, I'm very sad and disappointed in the decisions and actions the City of Clovis has made.

I sincerely hope you will support the seniors and community that love Jim, his classes, and the wood floor.

Please help preserve the Clovis a Way of Life.

Client IP = 107.77.214.90

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 11:43 AM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = Sharon Moore

Email = affectdestiny1@yahoo.com

Comment = Jim Ray was treated unfairly by the Clovis

Senior center! He didn't deserve to be! He has been a very loyal employee for over 30 years!!

Client IP = 209.30.242.178

Briana Parra

From: noreply@revize.com
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 1:09 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Briana Parra; Rebecca Simonian; Andrew Haussler
Subject: Council Meeting Public Comment

Council-Meeting-Date = 2025-09-08

Item-Number = 0

Full-Name = ROBERT JOHN GARCIA

Email = blscreenprinting@sbcglobal.net

Comment = Unable to locate item number. This comment is regarding the issue of the Clovis Adult Center and the protests of seniors in Jim Ray's dance classes. Jim has taught 30+ years and there is a reason for this. Aside from Jim excelling as an instructor, he created a safe, fun environment where we have mutual trust and friendship among seniors. Everyone is welcome. Clovis should be proud of having long-term employees like Jim, proud of a enviable wood dance floor, and proud of having vibrant seniors willing to stand up and speak for what they are passionate about. As residents, we need to ensure that the Clovis Way of Life keeps pace with changes in our city, but not at the expense of losing the very things that make us unique. We specifically want Jim back as a dance instructor if he is willing, and we want a safe dance floor. Help us continue to enjoy our dance community and take pride in our Senior Center.

Client IP = 73.90.148.50

Dear Clovis City Council,

My name is Tina Quillen, and I've proudly served as a USA Pickleball Ambassador for Clovis for approximately 9 years. I'm addressing the current conflict between pickleball players and ballroom dancers at the Activity Center and I am proposing a few solutions to meet the growing demand for pickleball facilities in our city.

For years, I've advocated for pickleball courts in Fresno and Clovis, as the sport's popularity has surged. The Clovis Pickleball Facebook page I manage has nearly 4,000 members, reflecting only a fraction of local players. Nationally, participation grew by over 45% in 2024, reaching an estimated 20 million players, according to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association. Pickleball is a professional sport, featured on ESPN, PickleballTV, and slated for future Olympic inclusion. Its appeal spans all ages, making it uniquely family-friendly and socially engaging.

Clovis faces a significant supply-and-demand issue. While Fresno has secured permanent courts at two parks, temporary lines at two others, and plans for a 16-court complex at Woodward Park, Clovis lacks dedicated outdoor and indoor facilities. Private tennis clubs with pickleball courts are overcrowded, and not everyone can afford memberships. The demand is undeniable: visitors to Clovis, including tourists visiting national parks or ski resorts, frequently ask where they can play, and I'm disheartened to say we have no courts to offer.

The Activity Center's attempt to accommodate pickleball is appreciated but falls short. The space has critical limitations: low ceilings hinder lobbing, a key aspect of the game; non-regulation court sizes restrict movement and serving; and walls interfere with play, causing paddles to collide and limiting defensive shots. Additionally, there's no space for players to gather, which is vital for the sport's social aspect, especially for seniors who rely on pickleball for community engagement. Many experienced players, including those who filled the first Wednesday night session I promoted, left disappointed due to these constraints.

I empathize with the ballroom dancers who have long used the Activity Center. They shouldn't have to share that small space. I agree that the tape is a hazard, painted lines one step better, but why? I also question the decision to exclude pickleball from the newly floored Rec Center while at the same time considering lines at the Activity Center, where space is inadequate.

Proposed Solutions:

- **Commercial Space:** How about using a vacant commercial building and turning it into a Supreme Pickleball venue run by the city that would bring players from all over the valley and satisfy the need of our local players, at the same time bringing in revenue.
- **Rec Center:** We used to have 3 courts at the Rec Center until the new floor went down. With not wanting to paint lines, I'm a little perplexed as to why you wouldn't paint lines on that new floor, where we had plenty of room with 3 courts, but would consider painting lines on the beautiful dance floor at the Activity Center, where there isn't enough room for even 1 regulation Pickleball court. Can we go back to the Rec Center?
- **Partnering with CUSD:** While utilizing 2 tennis courts at each of the High Schools this would produce 8 Pickleball courts at each location. Just painted lines is all we are talking about here. (this would be huge)

Pickleball is no fad, I can assure you. It's the fastest-growing sport globally, and Clovis needs to get on board. I urge the council to invest in dedicated facilities to meet this demand, fostering a healthier, more connected community. Thank you for your consideration, and I'm happy to discuss further.

Respectfully,

Tina Quillen

USA Pickleball Ambassador, Clovis

September 6, 2025

Dear City of Clovis, City Council Members, Management:

I am disappointed and saddened to learn of the decision to allow changes to the current wood dance floor in Clovis Community Center's in order to accommodate a pickle ball court. These changes will permanently affect the use of this beautiful floor for all of the dance groups which currently hold contracts with the city.

While it is understood that pickle ball draws a lot of participants, there are many other facilities in the city including schools for this sport to be played on.

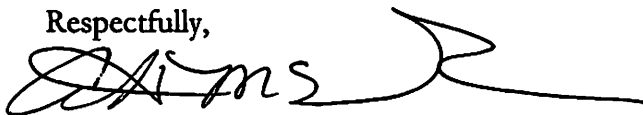
In contrary, the Dance Floor at the Community Center, is the one and only true wood dance floor in the City of Clovis where dance groups & classes of all genres have for many years enjoyed their sport without the risk of injury. If you are a dancer, you know the importance of a "good wood floor". Not only does this type of floor provide less impact on your body and joints, it also provides the necessary traction to keep from slipping. Please preserve this floor for it's intended use. Different sports have other options. Dancers do not.

Even more disturbing is the fact that an exterior texturized paint has already been applied to this wood floor, without any hesitation, knowing in full that the current groups who have contracts in place with the city for use of this facility because of its dance floor, strongly opposed this decision.

I trust that the City of Clovis, Council Members & Management will make the necessary corrections so that once again we as a community have the opportunity to continue to enjoy our sport and passion.

As of now, many are questioning the integrity of the management and others who are running this area of our city.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Audree McDowell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Audree McDowell

audreemcdowell@sbcglobal.net

559-261-5190



Mr. Joseph P. Thompson
416 W. Audubon Dr.
Fresno, CA 93711-6893

Received

SEP 08 2025

ADMN/CITYMGR

9-4-25

Sir, Please accept this
for Public Comment.
Thank you.

Joe Thompson

of HOLLISTER FREELANCE
LETTER IN GILROY DISPATCH & MORGAN HILL TIMES 9-3-2025; FALSE PROMISES BY BULLET
TRAIN'S NEW "BUSINESS PLAN"

From: Joseph P Thompson (translaw@pacbell.net)

To: ca05tm.outreach@mail.house.gov; tomlorimcc@comcast.net; ca01dlima@mail.house.gov;
repkevinkiley@mail8.housecommunications.gov; reachvince@mail.house.gov; repdavidvaladao@mail.house.gov;
rebobernalte@mail8.housecommunications.gov; senator.strickland@senate.ca.gov; joyce.rivero@sen.ca.gov;
assemblymember.tangipa@outreach.assembly.ca.gov; david@davidtangipaforassembly.com;
ian.coolbear@asm.ca.gov; belle.castro@asm.ca.gov; emily.tymn@asm.ca.gov;
assemblymember.macedo@assembly.ca.gov; rosalinda.alexander@asm.ca.gov; carl@reformcalifornia.org;
info@garrybredefeld.com; dotexecsec@dot.gov

Date: Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 11:50 AM PDT

Dear Mr. McClintock, Mr. LaMalfa, Mr. Kiley, Mr. Fong, Mr. Valadao, Mr. Obernolte,
Senator Strickland, Assemblymembers Tangipa, Macedo & DeMaio, Supervisor Bredefeld
& USDOT Secretary Sean Duffy,

I am attaching my letter published by Editor of Gilroy *Dispatch* & Morgan Hill *Times* yesterday.
He gave it the title, "Bullet train report is more lipstick on the pig." I also asked him to publish
it in the Hollister *Freelance*, too.

Both UPRR and BNSF have recently announced new intermodal services on Coast-to-Coast
and trans-Mississippi COFC and TOFC shipments. Increasing driver shortages make the intermodal
option more desirable for California's ag shippers. So, once again the private sector is showing us
how we ought to be increasing transportation options, and solving some of our transportation problems.

I believe that with UP proposing to merge with NS, the government have an opportunity to impose
shipper-friendly, taxpayer-friendly conditions on the r proposed merger. Then if BNSF proposes another
merger, the government ought to take the same approach.

Joseph P. Thompson, Esq.
Fresno, CA 93711 in Mr. McClintock's District
E-Mail: TransLaw@PacBell.Net



GILROY DISPATCH & M.H. TIMES 9-3-2025.pdf

147 kB

GILROY DISPATCH

Letter: Bullet train report is more lipstick on the pig

BY JOSEPH P. THOM · September 3, 2025



Letter to the editor

News reports that the California High Speed Rail Association's newest "business plan" proposes getting 18 million annual riders from Gilroy is, as predicted, more lipstick on a bankrupt-from-conception socialist boondoggle.

The population of Gilroy is 60,390, with 47,200 adults. Morgan Hill's population is 45,952. So, in round numbers we're looking at about 100,000 people of all ages. How many would take the Bullet Train every workday to Merced to Bakersfield? Would they pay full fare or like VTA, COG, etc., pay only about 1% of the cost of their rides?

Taxpayers, motorists, pay the balance of their costly rides. It would make Lenin blush. If they all rode Bullet Train, that would be .0055% of CAHSRA's pie-in-the-sky projected ridership.

So, it's safe to conclude that CHSRA's new "business plan" is pure, unadulterated horse-pucky as we liked to say when I had my law office there.

Gilroy's taxpayers, including crucified motorists, labor under "worst-in-the-nation" award winning VTA, awarded them for extraordinary fraud, waste and abuse by the M.I.T. study of all the nation's transit agencies. In more than 45 years of representing small and very small business owners in Gilroy and South Santa Clara County, I saw business failures and bankruptcies at higher rates than the national average. Why's that? Confiscatory taxes/fees/fines/assessments and mandates?

In 2008, when the Gilroy and Morgan Hill chambers invited me to debate former Supervisor Rod Diridon in the pre-election debate on Prop. 1A, I said the same thing that I said to the "Godfather of the Bullet Train" in 1996, the Honorable Judge and Sen. Quentin Kopp. Private sector solutions are the only sound, sustainable transport solutions for local, state and federal governments.

I repeated my position in testimony before the Assembly Transportation Committee in the Capitol in 2010 in support of proposed legislation to defund the Bullet Train.

Nothing has changed over the years since to make me change my position. In fact, construction and operating costs have increased dramatically, and will increase more before it's completed. In a guest opinion published by the Gilroy Dispatch in 2008, I predicted that gas taxes would have to increase to \$10 per gallon to fund the CAHSRA's monstrosity. Their fiscal bottomless pit is now so deep that I now double my previous estimate to \$20 per gallon. But then, what will we do if we tax people out of their cars?

Instead of creating another socialist public sector transit boondoggle, I think that we ought to learn from our history, and switch to private sector rail, which is the only sustainable way to run a railroad.

CAHSRA has, predictably, answered AB 377 with a new "business plan" that's no different than their previous plan to crucify the taxpayers. Asking a blood sucking leech to have a new diet is an exercise in futility. We cannot afford the blood-sucking leeches that our leaders have already plastered on our backs. No wonder people are fleeing California in record numbers.

Joseph P. Thompson, Esq.

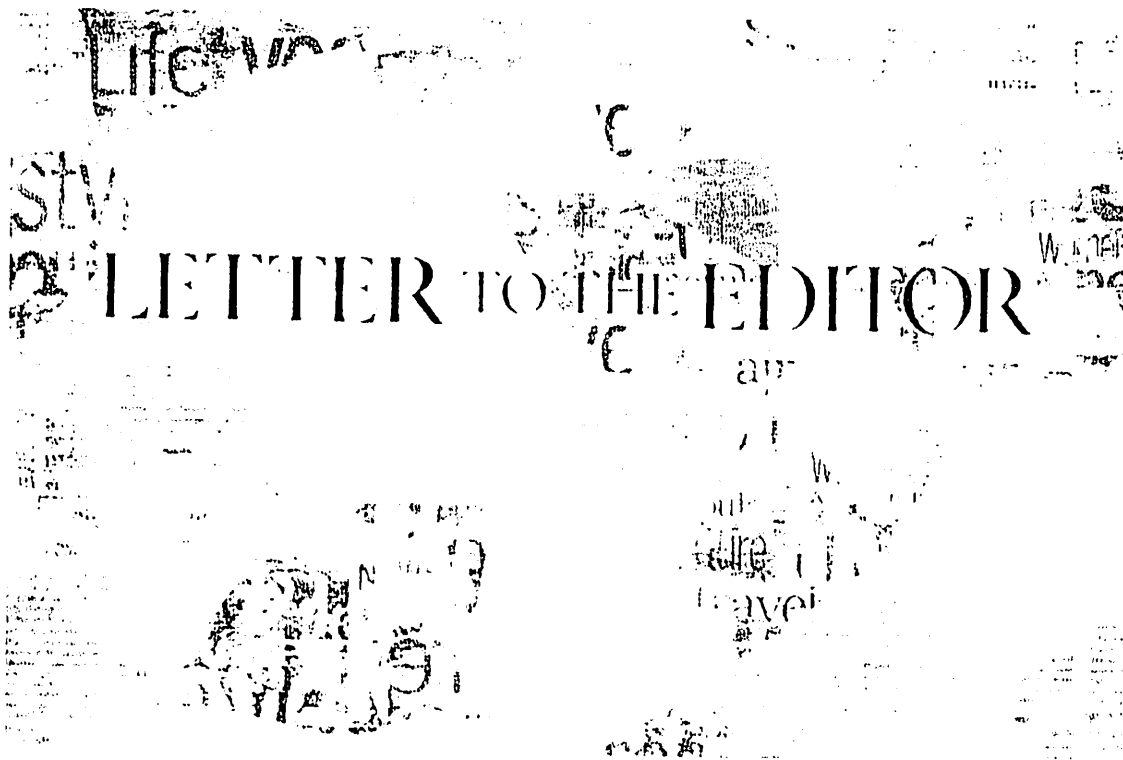
Past-President, 1999-2001, 2006, Gilroy-Morgan Hill Bar Assn.

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S Peter C. donated \$25
Si San Francisco, United States

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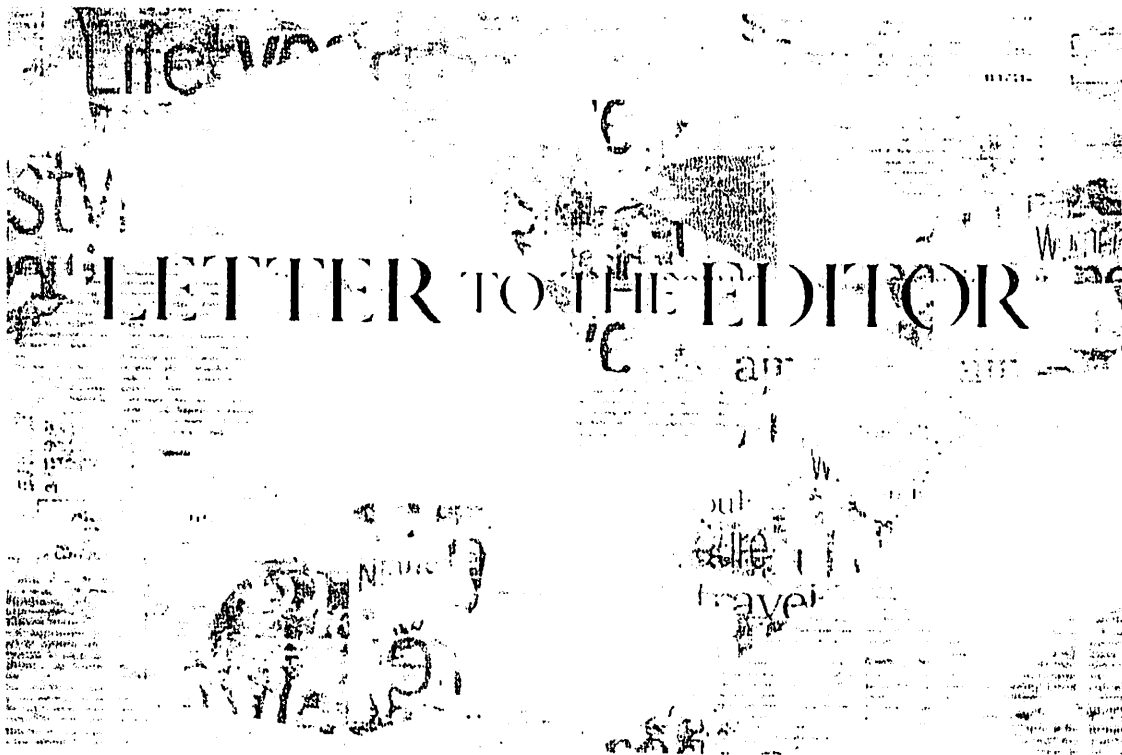
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Past-President, 1999-2001, 2006, Gilroy-Morgan Hill Bar Assn

JOSEPH P. THOM

Transit Productivity Evaluation FY 2020

Fresno Area Express/Handy Ride
Clovis Stageline/Roundup
Fresno County Rural Transit Agency
Consolidated Transportation Service Agency

March 12, 2021

*Fresno Council of Governments
2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201
Fresno, CA 93721
559-233-4148
www.fresnocog.org*

The preparation of this report has been financed in part through a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Transit Administration, and in part through local funds from the Fresno Council of Governments

and costs per hour increased by over 9%. Some of the agencies relied on traditional transit subsidies as well as on federal financial assistance via the CARES Act to maintain fixed route and paratransit service and address the additional operating costs of implementing the necessary COVID health and safety measures.

Public transportation operators in Fresno County provided 9.9 million passenger trips from the period beginning July 2019 through June 2020 (FY 2020) at a cost of approximately \$73 million. As shown in Table 1, the systems traveled a combined 7,891,119 miles and operated 671,518 hours of service. Fares collected totaled \$9.9 million, representing a farebox recovery ratio of 13.6 percent.

FAX, the largest public transit provider in the Fresno County region, provided 9.1 million passenger trips (91.6 percent of the county total), followed by the FCRTA, and CTSA with 266,621 trips (2.7 percent) and 234,949 trips (2.4 percent) respectively. Fresno Handy Ride provided 170,721 trips (1.7 percent of the county total), while Clovis Stageline and Clovis Roundup combined provided 162,862 (1.6 percent) of all trips.

System wide, 14.7 passengers per hour and 1.25 passengers per mile were carried during FY2020. The cost per hour was \$108.71 and cost per passenger was \$7.38. Overall, the systems provided 14.7% fewer passenger trips in FY 2020 than in FY 2019.

Table 1

** Fraud, waste + abuse*

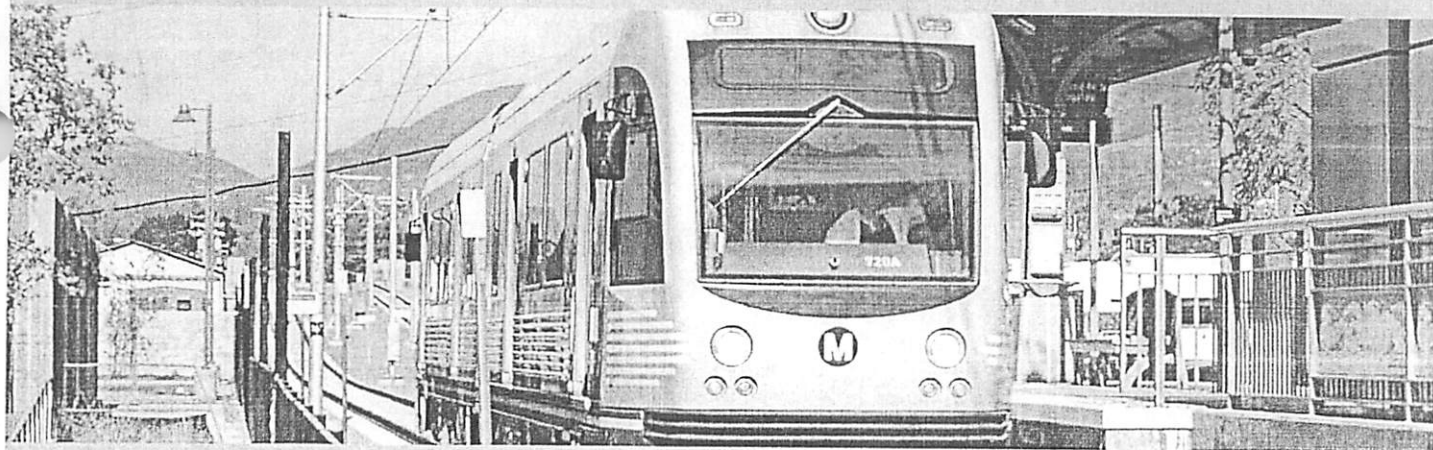
Agency	Passengers	Miles	Hours	Costs	Fare Revenues	Pass/Hour	Pass/Mile	Cost/Hour	Farebox Ratio
FAX	9,058,367	4,701,969	410,510	\$49,586,055	\$5,098,988	22.07	1.93	\$120.79	10.28%
Handy Ride	170,721	928,054	85,622	\$7,345,269	\$281,026	1.99	0.18	\$85.79	3.83%
Stageline	112,478	235,712	19,473	\$2,719,150	\$66,023	5.78	0.48	\$139.64	2.43%
Round-up	50,384	346,021	28,448	\$3,316,107	\$76,485	1.77	0.15	\$116.57	2.31%
FCRTA	266,621	788,004	66,822	\$5,586,983	\$586,028	3.99	0.34	\$83.61	10.49%
*CTSA	234,949	891,359	60,643	\$4,447,920	\$3,842,208	3.87	0.26	\$73.35	86.38%
Total	9,893,520	7,891,119	671,518	\$73,001,484	\$9,950,758	14.73	1.25	\$108.71	13.63%

CTSA statistics do not include clients, costs, miles, or hours associated with the urban and rural "Meal Delivery" services.

NOTE: Both FCRTA and CTSA farebox revenues include some social service augmentation consistent with Fresno COG's AB120 Action Plan and the State TDA. Clovis Stageline and Roundup farebox includes some Measure C funds. FAX and Clovis Stageline passengers include transfer passengers. FAX utilized local funding to augment their farebox to achieve the 20% recovery ratio.

A truly accurate system wide comparison is not possible due to different types of services, as well as the variations in the definitions of some of the performance indicators. For purposes of broad comparison, however, performance indicators by system are reflected in the above table.

** Does not include capital & fixed costs,
Taxpayers are forced to pay the balance.*



Falling Transit Ridership:

California and
Southern California

AUTHORS

Michael Manville

Brian D. Taylor

Evelyn Blumenberg

*Prepared for the Southern California Association of Governments
January 2018*

FALLING TRANSIT RIDERSHIP: CALIFORNIA AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

In the last 15 years Americans have supported public transportation more and demanded it less. California, the nation's most populous state, is in many ways emblematic of this pattern. Motivated by concerns about congestion and climate change, California's state and local governments have invested heavily in transit, often with the explicit approval of voters. This investment is particularly evident in Southern California. Since 1990, the six-county Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) region has added over 100 miles of light and heavy rail in Los Angeles County, and over 530 miles of commuter rail region-wide. In November 2016, voters in LA County approved a \$120 billion sales tax measure for transportation, with a plurality of the funding dedicated to expanding and improving transit (Measure M: Metro's Plan to Transform Transportation in LA 2016). This measure marked the third such countywide tax increase since 1990, and the fourth one overall. Other SCAG counties have also routinely passed sales tax measures for transportation and transit improvements.

Over the same period, however, California's transit use (depending on how one measures it) has varied from modest increases to relative stagnancy to—in more recent years—steep decline. Southern California is again illustrative. Despite its heavy investments in transit, in absolute terms the region's transit ridership reached its postwar peak in 1985. Through the 1990s and mid-2000s ridership rose and fell modestly, never reaching 1985 levels, and in 2012 it began declining. In per capita terms, ridership has fallen more steadily since the 1980s. Ridership per capita was flat in the early 2000s, but started trending down again in 2007. In California overall, per capita ridership was flat until 2009, when it began a decline from which it has not recovered (The National Transit Database (NTD), 2015).

Why is transit ridership falling? The question is not merely academic. The combination of rising supply and falling demand has profound fiscal implications for transit operators, since it substantially increases the public cost of moving each passenger. Increased transit supply has meant increased public investment, particularly in new rail services. Measured as a ten-year rolling average of capital and operating costs, transit investment in both the US and California rose almost 50 percent between 2000 and 2015. These rising expenditures, when combined with falling patronage, yield falling productivity. Between 2005 and 2016, transit productivity—measured as passenger boardings per vehicle revenue hour (VRH)—has fallen 5 percent in California and 14 percent in the SCAG region. Falling productivity is not sustainable; it usually ends with more subsidies or less service.

Beyond fiscal concerns, falling ridership calls into question a number of California's ambitious environmental goals. California's aggressive agenda for combatting climate change is predicated in part on many people using transit more and driving less. The carbon reduction targets set out in Senate Bill 375, California's landmark climate reduction bill of 2008, involve large mode shifts to transit and away from driving, while the California Department of Transportation's current Strategic Management Plan includes an explicit goal of doubling the state's transit mode share by 2020 (California Department of Transportation, 2015). But transit ridership, despite heavy transit investment, is trending very much in the opposite direction.

*To stop rewarding fraud, waste + abuse
by transit agencies.*

socioeconomic information. But the CHTS is a one-year snapshot, only available for 2012. As a result, we have a data mismatch: excellent data for a single year, but a research question – why is transit ridership declining? – that demands data on changes over time.

A last data obstacle is that the determinants of transit use are varied, ranging from gas prices to auto ownership to the quality of transit service, and no single data set contains all of them. Some factors thought to influence transit use, like the availability of free parking, are not systematically tracked at all.

To work around these limitations, we draw on an array of spatial, person-level, and administrative data. At different points we use the U.S. Census summary files, the Integrated Public Use Microdata (IPUMS) of the Census,² state and national travel diary data, gas price and economic data from the Energy Information Agency and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and data and rider surveys conducted by some of Southern California's larger transit operators. One operator—the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro, or LA Metro)—by itself accounts for most of the region's transit use and has ample public data available. As a result, at different points in the report when data for the entire region is lacking, we draw on data specific to LA Metro.

Largely because of these data constraints, the case we build is circumstantial; we offer no definitive proof of cause-and-effect. But the evidence is nevertheless compelling. The primary factor we identify is automobile ownership. In the last 15 years, household vehicle access in the SCAG region has grown dramatically. Vehicle ownership has grown particularly sharply among subgroups most likely to use transit, such as the low-income and the foreign born from Latin America. The steep rise in vehicle access among these groups that occurred as transit ridership began to fall is not direct proof, but it is a smoldering if not a smoking gun. Public transportation is unlikely to fare well when Southern California is flooded with additional vehicles. Much of the region's built environment is designed to accommodate the presence of private vehicles and to punish their absence. Extensive street and freeway networks link free parking spaces at the origin and destination of most trips. These circumstances give people strong incentives to acquire cars, and — once they have cars — to drive more and ride transit less.

The surge in vehicle ownership does not explain all of the transit decline. And it may well have been reinforced by falling gas prices and the rise of TNCs— though again we note that increasing vehicle ownership and declining transit use began before TNCs existed and when gas prices were still high. But increased vehicle ownership by itself probably explains much of Southern California's lost transit ridership.

Our findings accord with previous research about transit patronage. Giuliano (2005) has shown that compared to Americans at large, the poor use transit more but like it less. The typical low-income rider wants to graduate to automobiles, while the typical driver might view transit positively but have little interest in using it (Manville & Cummins, 2015). These facts, coupled with the falling ridership of recent years, raise questions about transit's future.

Transit ridership is not, by itself, a legitimate goal of public policy. Transit use is instead a means to achieve other public ends. Traditionally, transit's goals have been twofold: Providing mobility to disadvantaged people who lack it, and mitigating the social and environmental costs of private automobiles by providing alternatives to them. The first goal has long accounted for more of transit's ridership, while the second

² The IPUMS data are from Ruggles et al (2017)



has accounted for more of its rhetoric. Throughout the United States, and particularly in Southern California, public transportation advocates have emphasized transit's potential to manage traffic and reduce pollution. In practice, however, transit has functioned overwhelmingly as a social service for low-income people with little private mobility (Taylor & Morris, 2015).

Because transit has primarily carried low-income people, rising vehicle ownership among those people suggests a future where public transportation's core ridership could dramatically shrink. While this outcome poses a grave problem for transit operators, it is not obvious that transit operators should try to win these low-income riders back, at least not to the very high levels at which they rode transit previously. With very few exceptions, acquiring an automobile in Southern California makes life easier along multiple dimensions, dramatically increasing access to jobs, educational institutions and other opportunities (Kawabata & Shen, 2006). As a result, pulling low-income former riders out of their cars and back onto trains and buses could make transit agencies healthier but the region poorer. If transit agencies want to protect their fiscal health while also increasing social welfare, they may need to convince the vast majority of people who never use transit to begin riding occasionally instead of driving. This task is unquestionably more difficult than serving a large pool of people who have few alternatives to transit. Convincing some drivers to start using transit would likely require weakening or removing some of the state's and region's entrenched subsidies for motor vehicle use. But transit is unlikely to grow substantially, to accomplish its environmental goals, if driving remains artificially inexpensive.



THE SPATIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation use in the United States is distributed unevenly across people and places. Transit accounts for about two percent of all passenger miles travelled (PMT), and about two percent of personal trips overall (NHTS 2009). These small overall numbers, however, conceal transit's outsized importance to some people in some places. The average U.S. resident made about 32 transit trips in 2016 (Neff & Dickens, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016), but the modal resident made zero trips, and a small number of people rely on transit extensively. Chu (2012) shows that 20 percent of Americans live in neighborhoods without transit, while 60 percent live in neighborhoods with transit but have not used it in the previous month. Another 11 percent uses transit less than ten times per month, while eight percent take ten or more trips monthly.

The small share of people who use transit frequently is concentrated in a handful of metropolitan areas. In 2016, 65 percent of all transit boardings occurred on the nation's ten largest transit operators; the 15 systems in the New York region by themselves account for over 40 percent of the country's transit trips (FTA, 2016). Even within these transit-heavy areas, however, most people do not use transit regularly, because most transit use occurs in the central cities, and specifically among lower-income and foreign-

incomes to finance vehicle purchases. U.S. auto loan originations among subprime consumers increased 140 percent from 2010 to 2015 (New York Fed Consumer Credit Panel / Equifax). We do not have local-level data on vehicle debt, but inflation-adjusted per capita vehicle debt in California rose 91 percent between 2000 and 2015 (Federal Reserve Bank of New York).¹⁹

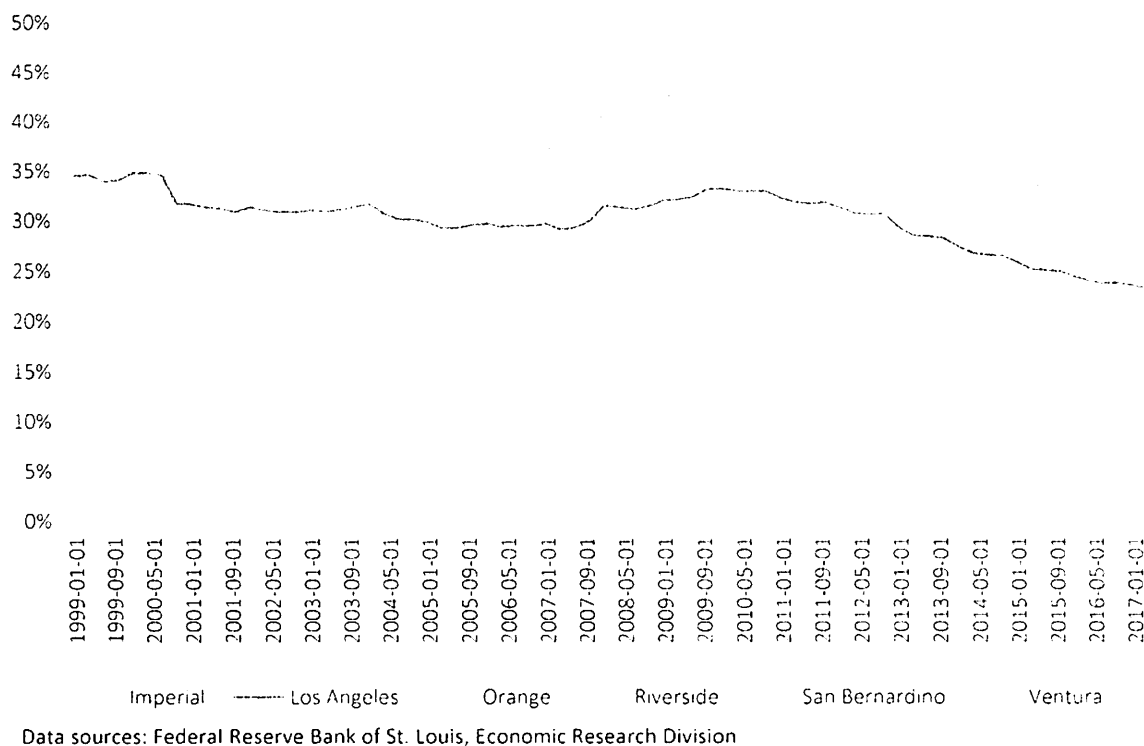


Figure 35. Percent of sample with credit scores below 660, by county in SCAG region.

CONCLUSION

Per capita transit ridership, long sluggish in Southern California, began to fall in 2007. In 2012 that per capita decline accelerated, and manifested as a more noticeable and more alarming absolute decline. The precise reasons for this decline are almost certainly manifold, and hard to disentangle. Gas prices fell sharply after rising steeply. The explosive growth of Uber and Lyft provided new mobility options to some people who had been mobility-constrained. In Orange County, fares rose substantially. On LA Metro, by at least some accounts, feelings of danger increased. Some of the people most likely to use transit moved to areas where transit was less prevalent. Especially in recent years, all these factors most likely contributed to transit's downturn.

¹⁹ Data come from the New York Federal Reserve Bank's Consumer Credit Panel.

But in weighing the evidence, the overwhelming factor appears to be a dramatic increase in the stock of private automobiles. Between 2000 and 2015 Southern Californians acquired vehicles at nearly four times the rate they had between 1990 and 2000. This growth of the private vehicle stock lines up—in timing, in magnitude, and in theory—with the region’s falling transit use. Vehicle access grew across all income levels and groups, but disproportionately among those groups, like the low-income and foreign-born, who are most likely to ride transit. Transit ridership in the SCAG region has long depended on a sizable minority of people who did not, largely for economic reasons, have access to cars. After 2000, many of these people acquired cars, and it should not surprise us that they started riding transit less.

To be sure, the case we build in reaching this conclusion is circumstantial. For reasons we have already enumerated, the data available to examine transit riders are scarce and fragmented, which leaves alternative explanations possible if not plausible. Certainly future research should emphasize more data collection. Given the data available today, however, in our judgement rising vehicle ownership is the best explanation for falling transit ridership.

If this explanation is sound, it poses a daunting problem for transit operators. When lower-income people graduate from transit to driving, transit agencies bear a cost, but the other side of that cost is a large benefit for both the people who start driving *and* for society overall. In the aggregate, Southern Californians drive too much, once the various costs of pollution, congestion and crashes are accounted for. But some Southern Californians – the poorest of them – drive *too little*, and both their lives and the region as a whole would be improved if they drove a bit more. The low-income person who acquires a vehicle often makes fewer trips than an affluent person (driving is expensive) and the trips they make are often essential, and have social benefits that exceed their social costs. A car trip by a low-income household is more likely than one by an affluent household to involve finding and keeping work, getting to school, or accessing better health and daycare options. These trips might modestly increase congestion and pollution, but they have large paybacks in employment, earnings, and overall well-being that exceed those costs. Affluent households, in contrast, make many more trips, and more trips whose social value is lower (they might increase congestion and pollution not just by driving to work, but also by driving to lunch, or to visit friends).

Given the powerful difference a car can make in the lives of low-income people, efforts by transit agencies to recapture low-income riders can have a perverse impact: they would target some of the highest-value vehicle trips in the region. Ideally, of course, transit agencies would pull people away from lower-value vehicle trips. It makes little sense to deprive a low-income person of their trip to work at a location poorly served by transit, when affluent people routinely drive for errands and visits that they could easily complete by foot or transit. A quick trip to a store a half mile away (or a trip to a store a mile away when a comparable store is a quarter mile away) is more likely to have social costs that exceed its benefits. And these trips are abundant.

Given this situation, and given the ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals that California has assigned to transit, planners and operators may need to expand transit’s target market. Transit should by no means abdicate its social service mission, but as we stated in the introduction, per capita transit use falls when current riders stop riding, and when new residents don’t start. Transit today relies on a high rate of use by a narrow base of people. But if that narrow base of people is acquiring vehicles, transit’s healthy future lies in reversing those circumstances, and striving for at least a low rate of use by a broad base of people. The SCAG region lost 72 million transit rides annually from 2012 to 2016. This number seems daunting,

but the region has 18.8 million people. According to the CHTS, about 77 percent of those people (roughly 14.5 million), ride transit rarely or never. Herein lies vast untapped potential. If one out of every four of those people replaced a single driving trip with a transit trip once every two weeks, annual ridership would grow by 96 million—more than compensating for the losses of recent years.

The obstacle to this outcome, however, is large and beyond the direct control of transit operators: driving is too cheap. The large subsidies given to transit in recent years pale next to the longstanding subsidies for automobiles that are hidden in unpriced road use, unpriced or underpriced street parking, high minimum parking requirements, and taxpayer- and developer-financed road-widenings. If public policy does not adequately confront underpriced driving, then transit ridership will likely continue to falter, and transit will not meet its ambitious environmental goals.

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Transit: The Urban Parasite

BY RANDAL O'TOOLE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The costs of supporting the nation's urban transit industry are rising, yet ridership is declining. Data released by the Federal Transit Administration in December 2019 indicate that 2018 transit ridership fell in 40 of the nation's top 50 urban areas, and, over the past five years ridership has fallen in 44 of those 50 urban areas. Data released by the Census Bureau in September 2019 indicate that the nation had 6.3 million more jobs in 2018 than 2015, yet the number of people who took transit to work declined by 146,000.

These declines have taken place in spite of huge increases in spending on public transit. In 2018 alone, subsidies to transit grew by 7.4 percent, increasing from \$50.5 billion to \$54.3 billion. Yet much greater increases will be needed to keep transit moving in many urban areas. A recent Department of Transportation report indicated that the transit industry has a \$100 billion maintenance backlog, mostly for its rail lines, and expenditures will have to increase by at least another \$6 billion

a year to fix this backlog within 20 years.

At the same time, the justifications for spending this much money subsidizing a declining industry are disappearing. Most low-income workers have given up on transit as a method of commuting and have purchased cars. Instead of helping low-income people, transit's major growth market is people who earn more than \$75,000 a year. In all but a handful of urban areas, transit uses more energy and emits more greenhouse gases per passenger mile than the average automobile. Far from relieving congestion, transit agencies are seeking to increase congestion in order to promote their businesses.

For all these reasons, it is time to end subsidies to transit and consider privatizing it instead. Private operators can provide transit at a lower cost than government agencies and will offer service that is responsive to transit riders, not political whims. To encourage this, Congress should end the transit capital improvement program (New Starts) and begin to phase out other federal subsidies to transit.

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“Transit saps the vitality of the urban areas it is parasitizing by demanding huge subsidies from taxpayers.”

INTRODUCTION

Data recently released by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) reveal that taxpayer subsidies to transit grew by more than \$3.7 billion, or 7.4 percent, between 2017 and 2018. Despite this increase, ridership fell by 215 million transit trips, or 2.1 percent. The massive increase in spending didn't even result in an increase in transit service, as measured in vehicle-revenue miles, which declined by 0.9 percent.

Preliminary data from the FTA also indicate that 2019 will be the fifth straight year of declining transit ridership, with ridership falling 7.8 percent since 2014 and, in many urban areas, falling by 20 to 30 percent. After adjusting for inflation, annual taxpayer subsidies to transit grew by 15 percent between 2014 and 2018, yet that increase did not prevent the decline in transit ridership. Fares are covering an ever-diminishing share of the costs of transit: just 23 percent in 2018. Economists would suggest this indicates that transit users don't place a high value on this service.

This raises questions about whether it is worthwhile for federal, state, and local governments to continue to subsidize transit. Transit advocates argue that it relieves congestion, saves energy, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and provides mobility for low-income people and others who don't drive a car. In essence, they claim that cities and transit have a symbiotic relationship, and that urban taxpayers who don't ride transit nevertheless should pay to subsidize transit systems so that those systems can provide them with important benefits, such as lower traffic congestion.

A more realistic look at the data suggests that, outside of New York and perhaps a half-dozen other urban areas, these benefits are tiny to nonexistent, especially when compared with the costs. Transit is no longer more energy efficient than driving: the energy efficiency of automobiles is increasing, while the energy efficiency of transit is declining. Transit no longer serves large numbers of low-income people, as most of them have purchased automobiles. Transit systems with declining ridership do little or nothing to relieve urban congestion;

nearly empty buses often increase congestion.

In short, the relationship between transit and most urban areas is not a symbiotic one but a parasitic one. Like any parasite, transit saps the vitality of the entities it is parasitizing, in this case by demanding huge subsidies from taxpayers. Like many parasites, some transit agencies even seek to reshape the regions they parasitize to make them more congenial for the health of transit even though such changes impose higher costs of living on the residents of those cities.

Transit advocates have reached the point where they act as though the purpose of cities and their residents is to benefit transit. In fact, transit should benefit residents by enhancing their mobility and well-being. If transit is not doing that, and people no longer value it, then it should not be subsidized.

RIDERSHIP IS FALLING

The transit industry is in crisis, as ridership has fallen for the fifth straight year. Counting the year ending December 31, 2019, the FTA reports that 2019 ridership was 7.9 percent below 2014 ridership. While the 2019 numbers are still preliminary, the FTA's final 2018 report indicates that transit carried 215 million fewer trips in 2018 than in 2017, a 2.1 percent drop. Ridership in 2018 declined from 2017 in 40 out of the nation's 50 largest urban areas.¹

Bus ridership began falling first, with ridership decreasing every year since 2012. By 2019, bus ridership reached its lowest level of any year since 1939. But rail ridership has been falling since 2016, and in 2018 it fell by a larger percentage than bus ridership.²

Ridership declines in many urban areas were much greater than the average rate of decline. Since 2013, Los Angeles has lost 23 percent of its riders, Miami 29 percent, St. Louis 24 percent, and Cleveland 33 percent. Ridership in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Washington—three of the nation's biggest transit regions—all fell by 12 percent or more.³

Transit is bucking the trend in only a handful of the nation's major urban areas. Number

one is Seattle, where ridership has grown by 8 percent in the past five years. As will be described below, the primary reason for this is a massive increase in jobs located in downtown Seattle.

More modest growth has been seen in Houston, Richmond, and Columbus, Ohio. Transit agencies in these cities revamped their bus systems, increasing bus frequencies on popular routes, reducing or eliminating service on unpopular routes, and relocating routes to replace historic hub-and-spoke systems, which made sense when most jobs were downtown, with grid systems, which make more sense now that most jobs are in the suburbs.⁴ While these examples are worth emulating, such overhauls will provide a one-time boost in ridership but will not solve the industry's long-term problems. Houston was the first major city to do such a redesign, and ridership grew for several years but now appears to have leveled out.

TRANSIT'S GROWING IRRELEVANCE

Table 1 shows that New York is the only urban area in the United States where transit plays a dominant role in people's daily lives. Transit carries more than half of all employees to work in New York City and almost a third in the New York urban area (which includes northeastern New Jersey, most of Long Island, Westchester, and Danbury, Connecticut). The average resident of the region rides transit well over 200 times a year.

It is important to distinguish New York from other urban areas because New York is so different from any other American region: what happens in New York, at least from a transportation view, has almost no applicability anywhere else. With almost 28,000 people per square mile, New York has, by far, the highest population density of any major city in the country, and with more than 71,000 people per square mile, Manhattan is the highest-density part of a city.⁵ Lower Manhattan has two million jobs, which is 4 times that of any other job concentration in the United States and more

than 10 times the number of downtown jobs in all but six other cities.⁶

The economic and population boom in New York since 1990 led to a 68 percent increase in the region's transit ridership between 1991 and 2014. This increase helped conceal problems with the transit industry in other parts of the country, which only became obvious after 2014, when even the New York ridership began to decline.

Reflecting the long-term decline in the importance of transit in most other parts of the country, New York's share of the nation's transit riders grew from 33.5 percent in 1991 to 44.5 percent in 2019. Outside of New York, 2019 ridership was 12 percent lower than in 2014.⁷

San Francisco–Oakland is a distant second to New York, as transit carries about 18 percent of Bay Area employees to work and the average resident rides transit 126 times a year. Transit also plays an important, although hardly dominant, role in Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington, Boston, and Seattle: it carries 10–15 percent of commuters, represents 2–4 percent of overall motorized travel, and averages 60–90 annual trips per resident. Honolulu almost makes this grouping, as its transit carries the average resident on 78 trips a year; however, it only carries 8 percent of commuters to work and many transit trips there are taken by tourists.

In a few more urban areas, including Los Angeles, Minneapolis–St. Paul, Baltimore, Portland, and a few college towns, transit plays a measurable, although hardly important, role, carrying 5–7 percent of employees to work and the average resident on 30–50 trips per year. Everywhere else, transit is almost completely irrelevant.

COSTS ARE RISING

Ridership isn't falling because of declining resources. In fact, taxpayer subsidies to transit rose by more than \$3.7 billion, or 7.4 percent, between 2017 and 2018.⁸ Total subsidies were \$54.3 billion in 2018, or more

“Reflecting the long-term decline of transit in other parts of the country, New York's share of the nation's transit riders grew from 33.5 percent in 1991 to 44.5 percent in 2019.”

Table 1

Transit ridership data by urban area

Urban area	2018 trips per capita	2018 transit share of commuting	2017 transit share of all travel	Ridership growth, 2014–2019
New York	224	32.5%	11.5%	-2.8%
Los Angeles	44	5.0%	1.8%	-21.3%
Chicago	67	13.1%	3.4%	-11.1%
Miami	21	3.1%	1.1%	-28.1%
Philadelphia	61	10.7%	2.4%	-11.1%
Dallas–Ft. Worth	12	1.6%	0.5%	-3.2%
Houston	16	2.3%	0.7%	5.4%
Washington	81	15.2%	3.2%	-11.7%
Atlanta	25	3.4%	0.9%	-8.6%
Boston	85	14.3%	2.7%	-11.4%
Detroit	10	1.4%	0.4%	-5.9%
Phoenix	17	1.9%	0.7%	-6.5%
San Francisco–Oakland ⁽¹⁾	126	18.2%	5.3%	-3.5%
Seattle	65	11.6%	3.4%	8.8%
San Diego	31	2.7%	1.3%	-11.1%
Minneapolis–St. Paul	33	5.5%	1.1%	-4.8%
Tampa–St. Petersburg	9	1.4%	0.3%	-15.6%
Denver–Boulder–Longmont ⁽²⁾	36	4.0%	1.6%	2.0%
Baltimore	44	7.3%	2.3%	-16.8%
St. Louis	19	2.5%	0.6%	-24.9%
San Juan	13	2.6%	0.9%	-45.6%
Riverside–San Bernardino ⁽³⁾	8	1.4%	0.4%	-21.4%
Las Vegas	31	3.3%	0.9%	-1.2%
Portland	53	7.0%	2.3%	-3.7%
Cleveland	20	3.1%	0.7%	-30.9%
San Antonio	20	2.1%	0.6%	-18.0%
Pittsburgh	38	7.2%	1.4%	-1.5%
Sacramento	13	2.2%	0.6%	-23.2%
San Jose	21	4.1%	0.9%	-10.4%
Cincinnati	11	2.1%	0.4%	-15.2%
Kansas City	10	1.1%	0.2%	-7.9%
Orlando	12	1.5%	0.5%	-15.7%
Indianapolis	6	1.1%	0.1%	-10.7%
Virginia Beach	10	1.6%	0.4%	-24.2%



Milwaukee	23	3.0%	0.7%	-28.8%
Columbus	13	2.0%	0.3%	1.3%
Austin	18	2.2%	0.6%	-9.2%
Charlotte	15	2.2%	0.4%	-17.2%
Providence	15	2.4%	0.5%	-18.2%
Jacksonville	10	1.1%	0.3%	-8.2%
Memphis	6	0.8%	0.2%	-28.0%
Salt Lake–Ogden–Provo	19	2.5%	0.8%	-3.3%
Louisville	12	2.1%	0.5%	-26.2%
Nashville	10	1.3%	0.3%	-0.8%
Richmond	8	2.0%	0.4%	3.3%
Buffalo	27	3.5%	0.7%	-3.8%
Hartford	21	3.2%	0.9%	-2.4%
Bridgeport	11	10.0%	0.3%	-19.4%
New Orleans	23	3.3%	0.6%	-14.9%
Raleigh	9	1.1%	0.2%	31.7%
Oklahoma City	3	0.6%	0.1%	15.7%
Tucson	19	2.4%	0.8%	-24.3%
El Paso	16	1.2%	0.7%	-0.4%
Honolulu	78	8.0%	3.7%	-7.1%
Birmingham	4	0.7%	0.1%	-4.7%
Albuquerque	14	1.6%	0.8%	-29.4%
McAllen ^{1,4}	2	0.2%	0.1%	15.1%
Omaha	4	0.8%	0.1%	-19.5%
Dayton	13	2.5%	0.5%	-10.0%
Rochester NY	21	2.8%	0.5%	-13.9%
Allentown	7	1.9%	0.3%	-13.0%
Tulsa	4	0.7%	0.1%	-17.0%

Sources: Transit trips per capita are based on total transit trips from the "2018 National Transit Database," Federal Transit Administration.

https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/Funding%20Sources_2.xlsx, divided by the American Community Survey's 2018 estimates of urban area populations, "Means of Transportation to Work, 2018," American Community Survey, Table B08301 (for urbanized areas).

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=b08301&g=0100000US.400000&tid=ACSDT1Y2018.B08301&hidePreview=true>. Transit's share of commuting is from "Means of Transportation to Work, 2018," American Community Survey, Table B08301. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=b08301&tid=ACSDT1Y2018.B08301>.

Transit's share of all travel by urban area is calculated by comparing vehicle miles of travel in "Highway Statistics 2017," Federal Highway Administration Table HM-72. <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2017/hm72.cfm>, with passenger miles of travel in "2017 Annual Database Service," Federal Transportation Administration, <https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd/data-product/2017-annual-database-service>. Vehicle miles of travel were converted to passenger miles by multiplying by 1.67, the average occupancy of automobiles according to the 2017 National Household Travel Survey (Washington: Federal Highway Administration, 2019), Table 16.

Notes: Urban areas are ordered by population rank, from largest to smallest.

1. Includes Concord and Livermore.

2. Transit's share of commuting includes Denver-Aurora only, not Boulder or Longmont.

3. Includes Murrieta-Temecula.

4. Transit's share of commuting is based on 2017 data; ridership growth is shown for 2014–2018.



“The maintenance backlog for guideways (such as rails) is \$23 billion, yet the transit industry reduced its spending on guideway repairs by \$131 million in 2018.”

than \$5.50 for each trip and \$1.01 per passenger mile. By comparison, subsidies to driving are about a penny per passenger mile.⁹ Of the increase, \$1.9 billion went to increased operating costs, mostly for higher labor costs. Nearly \$700 million went for benefits, while salaries and wages increased by \$235 million.

The other \$1.8 billion in increased costs went to capital costs. The FTA counts capital costs in two categories: *existing systems* and *extended systems*. Capital spending on extended systems represents genuine capital improvements, while spending on existing systems represents replacement of worn-out infrastructure and vehicles. In 2018, spending on replacement grew by \$1.1 billion, while spending on capital improvements grew by \$0.5 billion.

The increase in spending on capital replacement was needed because in recent decades transit agencies have been building new infrastructure without replacing the existing infrastructure as it wears out. The FTA calls this the *state-of-good-repair backlog*. A Department of Transportation report released in November 2019 estimates that this backlog was \$106 billion (in 2019 dollars).¹⁰ The FTA says that, as of 2015, the transit industry hadn't been spending enough on capital replacement to keep the backlog from growing further, much less enough to shrink it.

It isn't even clear that the transit industry is serious about eliminating the state-of-good-repair backlog. According to the FTA, the backlog for guideways (such as rails) is \$23 billion.¹¹ Yet in 2018, transit agencies *reduced* spending on guideway repairs by \$131 million, while they increased spending on new guideways by \$217 million.¹² They did increase spending on station replacements, probably because stations are more visible to the public than guideways, and repairing or replacing them creates an appearance that the agencies are fixing problems. Yet worn-out tracks create a serious safety hazard, while worn-out stations merely look unattractive.

Even if it were properly allocated, the 2018 increase in spending on capital replacement was so small that, at that rate, it would take

more than 75 years to eliminate the backlog. It will be necessary to increase spending on capital replacement by at least \$6 billion more a year in order to eliminate the backlog in 20 years.¹³ One way to do this would be to shift all the money now being spent on capital improvements to capital replacement—a measure that transit agencies are unwilling to consider. Unless that happens, the cost of sustaining transit systems will continue to rise even if ridership continues to fall.

FARES RISING, SERVICE DECLINING

Despite the increase in costs, service, as measured in vehicle-revenue miles, declined by 0.9 percent.¹⁴ Despite the decline in ridership, fare revenues grew by 0.3 percent in 2018, which, however, only covered 1 percent of the increase in costs.

The revenue increase was possible because the average fare per trip grew by 2.5 percent.¹⁵ This suggests that at least some transit agencies have entered a death spiral, meaning that they respond to declining ridership by increasing fares and cutting service, which further reduces ridership and forces more fare increases and service cuts.

Transit agencies rely on fares to cover a third of their operating costs, yet a new movement has sprung up for free transit. As part of this movement, on November 29, 2019, transit riders were encouraged by various activists to hop turnstiles or otherwise ride transit without paying. Supposedly, this would strike a blow against capitalism even though transit is one of the most socialized industries in the United States (and almost everywhere else in the world).¹⁶

In support of this movement, California State Sen. Scott Wiener argues that taxpayers should pay for a higher percentage of transit's costs because “transit is a public good and should have taxpayer support.”¹⁷ In fact, transit is not a public good, at least in the economic sense of the term. A public good is one that is nonrivalrous (i.e., one person's consumption of the good doesn't reduce another's

consumption of it) and nonexcludable (i.e., no one can be physically denied use of the good). Government often provides public goods because, given those two characteristics, private providers would be hard-pressed to have enough paying customers.

However, transit does not suffer from either of those characteristics. If I sit in a transit seat, you can't sit there, too; thus it is rivalrous. Putting gates on the entrances to transit stations and doors on the entrances to buses and other transit vehicles makes transit excludable. Hence, private providers can provide transit services (and in some cases do so)—if there is sufficient demand.

Wiener could mean something else when he uses the term "public good," but it is not clear what. Perhaps he simply means that it is currently provided by public agencies. But just because something happens to be supported by tax subsidies today doesn't mean it deserves those subsidies or that they should continue forever, especially when transit use is declining.

Other people (including people responding to Wiener's statement) claim that everyone benefits from transit, so therefore everyone should contribute to it through subsidies. I will argue that the supposed benefits of transit—reducing congestion, saving energy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, helping low-income people, and promoting economic development—are either tiny or nonexistent. Besides, it could easily be argued that everything benefits everyone in some way or another, but that doesn't mean everything should be subsidized by the government.

More recently, Curbed—a staunchly pro-transit website produced by VoxMedia—argued that "free transit isn't enough" and that "transportation needs to be a right" because people need "access to opportunity."¹⁸ If that's true, then the most effective government policy would be to give everyone in the country a free car. The most recent studies from the University of Minnesota Accessibility Observatory show that, in America's major urban areas, a 20-minute auto drive allows people to access twice as many jobs, and a 30-minute

auto drive allows them to access four times as many jobs, as a 60-minute transit ride.¹⁹

Even from the viewpoint of transit riders, there are several problems with free transit. First, if transit agencies are 100 percent dependent on tax dollars, they will be far more responsive to politicians than transit riders. This means they will run transit when and where it is highly visible, but not where transit riders may need it the most. This can be seen in Los Angeles, where the county's transit agency, Metro, has been building highly visible light-rail lines even as they lose five bus riders for every rail rider they gain. According to a survey from the Transit Center, even low-income riders would prefer improvements in transit frequencies over reductions in fares.²⁰

Second, making ridership free won't necessarily significantly increase transit ridership. Tallinn, Estonia, a city of 430,000 people, reduced its transit fares to zero in 2013, yet ridership increased by only 1.2 percent in the first year, and most of that increase resulted from people choosing to take transit rather than walk, not as a replacement for driving.²¹ After five years, ridership grew by just 5 percent, which might have happened anyway.

Third, funding transit out of fares rather than taxes imposes a discipline on transit agencies to keep costs low and transit affordable. When capital costs are funded exclusively out of taxes, transit agencies go wild, spending billions of dollars on rail transit systems that are not any better (and in many respects worse) than buses. When operating costs are funded largely out of taxes, transit agencies allow costs such as labor to balloon.

Fourth, making transit free turns transit vehicles into rolling homeless shelters. Austin, Texas, experimented with a free transit system in 1989 and 1990. While ridership increased, much of the increase was because the elimination of fares attracted homeless people and other "problem riders." Physical assaults on-board buses tripled after fares were eliminated, and consequently costs increased because of the need to hire additional transit security officers. For their own safety and that of the

“Transit is not a public good, at least in the economic sense of the term, and doesn't deserve the kind of subsidies that public goods might receive.”

“Funding transit out of fares rather than subsidies imposes a discipline on transit agencies to keep costs low and transit affordable.”

riders, 75 percent of bus drivers signed a petition to restore bus fares and the experiment ended after little more than a year.²² Other American cities that experimented with free transit had similar issues.²³

A 2011 survey of transit fares found that nearly three dozen cities in the United States offer free transit. All of them were in small urban areas and most were either resort communities or university-dominated cities.²⁴ Despite the free fares, however, transit does not play a dominant role in the transportation systems of any of those cities or towns.

In December 2019, the Kansas City, Missouri, council voted to make all transit in the area free. Councilmembers reasoned that fares were already so low that they brought in little more than 10 percent of the bus system's operating costs and the city promised to make up the \$9 million shortfall.²⁵ This was a remarkable decision, given the 30 percent decline in bus ridership the system has experienced since 2012. Final implementation of this plan is still under consideration by the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority.

TRANSIT SPEEDS DECLINING

Los Angeles Metro blames the loss of transit riders on slowing transit speeds resulting from traffic congestion.²⁶ This leads transit advocates to argue that transit buses deserve their own lanes in order to boost speeds and increase ridership.²⁷ This is ironic, considering that the increase in traffic congestion in Los Angeles and many other regions is largely due to policies that devote most regional transportation dollars to building rail transit lines rather than improving roadway capacities.

In fact, transit supporters are openly applauding projects that will increase traffic congestion in the hope that it will encourage some auto users to ride transit instead. “It’s too easy to drive in this city,” says Los Angeles Metro head Philip Washington. To get people back on the bus, he wants to “actually make driving harder” by converting lanes on streets that are now open to all traffic into exclusive bus

lanes.²⁸ Considering that the Los Angeles urban area is already one of the most congested cities in the world, and that almost 90 percent of its commuters get to work by automobile, it isn’t clear that adding additional congestion will change anyone’s driving habits.

Federal Transit Administration data offer some support for the claim that ridership is affected by transit speeds. Average transit speeds can be roughly calculated by dividing vehicle-revenue miles by vehicle-revenue hours. By this measure, transit vehicles nationwide averaged 15.08 miles per hour in 2018, down from 15.16 miles per hour in 2017 and 15.20 miles per hour in 2016. Los Angeles bus speeds averaged 10.4 miles per hour in 2018, down from 10.5 in 2017 and 10.6 in 2016.²⁹

Using ridership and speed data going back to 1994, the correlation between Los Angeles Metro bus speeds and ridership is a respectable 0.65. Using data going back to 1991 and counting all transit in the country, the correlation is even higher, at 0.78. Of course, correlation doesn’t prove causation, and there may be other factors at work affecting both speeds and ridership. Moreover, reduced speeds don’t explain recent declines in rail ridership, as trains are generally not subject to highway congestion.

In any case, rather than make congestion worse for nonbus riders (the great majority of people in every American city not named New York) in order to make it better for buses, it would make more sense to fund programs that would relieve congestion for *everyone*. This is especially true because simply having dedicated bus lanes doesn’t make buses move much faster, as most of their time is spent picking up and dropping off passengers. The 2018 database reveals, for example, that supposedly “rapid buses,” many of which use dedicated lanes, go an average of 10.1 miles per hour, compared with 12.0 miles per hour for regular buses.³⁰

TRANSIT COMMUTING DECLINED IN 2018

Transit’s decline is also revealed in the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey,

which is based on surveys of about 3.5 million households per year. The 2018 survey revealed that the nation had 1.8 million more workers in 2018 than in 2017, yet the number who took transit to work fell by 23,000. Nearly all of the decline was in bus transit, which lost 58,000 commuters, while rail transit commuting grew by 22,500.³¹ Since 2015, the United States has gained 6.3 million workers, yet transit lost 146,000 commuters.³²

This doesn't mean that cities are better off building more rail transit, as many regions with rail transit saw overall declines in transit commuting. Some of the biggest declines in transit commuting took place in Baltimore (–11,000 transit commuters), Denver (–7,300), and San Diego (–7,500). Transit commuting also declined in Atlanta, Boston, Houston, Minneapolis–St. Paul, Nashville, Orlando, Phoenix, Portland, Salt Lake City, San Francisco–Oakland, and St. Louis.³³ All of these are urban areas that have opened up new rail transit lines in recent years.

This downward trend is a reversal of previous years, when the American Community Survey reported that the number of people commuting by transit grew, even if it didn't grow as fast as other methods of commuting. Yet, even before 2018, overall ridership was declining because of a reduction in nonwork trips. Now, both transit commuting and ridership are moving in the same direction: downward.

The fall in transit commuting meant that the *share* of workers commuting by transit also fell, and in 2018 was just 4.9 percent. Transit is an important method of commuting in only a few urban areas. While almost a third of workers in the New York urban area commute by transit, it carries more than 10 percent of workers in just six other major urban areas: Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco–Oakland, Seattle, and Washington. (Concord, California, is also on the list, but that is really a part of the San Francisco–Oakland urban area.)³⁴

In most of the rest of the country, transit borders on insignificance. Transit carries less than 5 percent of workers in Denver, Los Angeles, and San Jose; less than 4 percent in

Atlanta, Cleveland, and Salt Lake City; less than 3 percent in Austin, Charlotte, Houston, San Diego, and St. Louis; and less than 2 percent in Dallas–Ft. Worth, Detroit, Orlando, and Tampa–St. Petersburg. The number of people who work at home was greater than the number of people who take transit to work for the first time in 2017, and the difference grew in 2018, with 5.3 percent of workers working at home.

TRANSIT INCREASINGLY USED BY HIGH-INCOME PEOPLE

One justification for transit subsidies is that they help low-income people, but low-income people are dramatically reducing their use of transit. One study of Los Angeles ridership blamed the decline in bus ridership mainly on the increase in auto ownership among low-income workers.³⁵

The American Community Survey confirms that transit use among low-income workers is declining, while transit's major growth market is among high-income workers. The 2017 survey was the first to find that the median income of transit riders was higher than the national median of all workers.³⁶ This was true in urban areas all over the country, including Boston, Chicago, San Francisco–Oakland, Seattle, and Washington.

In 2018, the median income of transit commuters rose to be higher than people who commute by any other method, including driving, walking, and cycling. Only people who worked at home had higher median incomes.³⁷ Again, this was true in many major urban areas.

The survey further revealed that people in every income class below \$25,000 a year are decreasing their use of transit for getting to work and were 6 percent less likely to commute by transit in 2018 than they were in 2010. Meanwhile, people earning more than \$65,000 a year were 7 percent more likely to commute by transit in 2018 than in 2010. The fastest growth in transit commuting is among people who earn more than \$75,000 a year. People earning above \$75,000 are especially disproportionately likely to ride transit in

“The head of the Los Angeles Metro thinks it's too easy to drive in the city and wants to make driving harder by converting existing street lanes into exclusive bus lanes.”

“From 2010 to 2018, people earning less than \$25,000 a year were 6 percent less likely to commute by transit, while people earning more than \$65,000 were 7 percent more likely to commute by transit.”

Boston, Chicago, New York, and San Jose.³⁸

Transit subsidies are also supposed to help provide mobility for people who don't have cars. But the American Community Survey reveals that most workers who don't have cars don't take transit to work. The 2018 survey found that only 40 percent of workers who live in households without access to cars take transit to work. In fact, in many urban areas, including Charlotte, Dallas–Ft. Worth, Denver, Houston, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Miami, Sacramento, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, and Tampa–St. Petersburg, more people who live in households without cars nevertheless drive alone to work (possibly in employer-supplied vehicles) than take transit to work.

Studies show that low-income people are rational to prefer driving over transit. One study found that unskilled people were 80 percent more likely to have a job and earned \$1,100 more a month if they had a car. In fact, the study found that owning a car was more helpful to getting and keeping a job than getting a high-school-equivalent diploma.³⁹

As previously noted, this is because people can reach far more jobs and other economic opportunities within a 20-minute drive than they would within a 60-minute transit trip. This is why some nonprofit groups now specialize in making low-interest loans to low-income people to buy cars. The borrowers may have poor credit ratings, but once they own a car they often quickly find a job and pay off their loans.⁴⁰

TRANSIT DOESN'T PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Another reason often used to justify subsidies to transit is that it saves energy and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Data in the 2018 National Transit Database reveal that this is no longer true (and hasn't been for several years).

The database indicates how many gallons of diesel fuel, gasoline, and other fuels are used by transit agencies, along with the number of kilowatt-hours used by electrically powered transit. The conversion of gallons and kilowatt-hours

to common units of energy is straightforward based on factors provided by the U.S. Department of Energy.⁴¹ In calculating electrical energy, I tripled the amount of energy used by transit. This is to account for the average generation and transmission losses measured by the Department of Energy, meaning that it takes three British thermal units (BTUs) of fossil fuels or other power sources to deliver one BTU to electric customers.⁴²

Based on these calculations, American transit systems used an average of slightly more than 3,400 BTUs to move one passenger one mile in 2018. This number has increased every year since 2014, mainly because the average number of people onboard transit vehicles (calculated by dividing passenger miles by vehicle-revenue miles) has declined by nearly 20 percent since 2014. This happened because the transit ridership declined but transit agencies didn't proportionately reduce their transit service.

By comparison, the most recent data available indicate that the average car uses only about 2,900 BTUs per passenger mile, while the average light truck (SUVs, pickups, full-sized vans) uses 3,400.⁴³ Moreover, both of these numbers are declining. Transit began using more BTUs per passenger mile than the average car in 2008, and it is poised to use more than the average light truck by 2019. Personal driving in the United States is almost equally shared by cars and light trucks, so transit's per passenger-mile energy consumption is greater than the average of all automobiles, which is about 3,200 BTUs per passenger mile.

As shown in Table 2, the results are even worse for transit on an urban-area basis. Among the nation's 100 largest urban areas, transit is more energy efficient than cars only in New York, San Francisco–Oakland, and Honolulu, and more energy efficient than light trucks in those regions, plus Atlanta and Portland. Counting all 488 urban areas, transit is more energy efficient than the average car in just 4 of them, and more energy efficient than the average truck in just 12 of them. In many urban areas, including Dallas–Ft. Worth, Indianapolis, Kansas City, San Antonio, and Sacramento,

transit uses twice as much energy per passenger mile than the average car.

Calculations of greenhouse gas emissions per gallon of fuel are also straightforward, as based on standard conversion measures. Emissions per kilowatt-hour depend on the sources of electrical power. Power producers in different states use different combinations of fossil fuels and other fuels to generate electricity, resulting in different outputs of greenhouse gases per megawatt. To account for this, I applied U.S. Energy Information Agency estimates of the pounds of carbon dioxide per megawatt-hour for the electricity generated in each state to transit agencies based on the locations of their headquarters.⁴⁴

Based on these calculations, transit nationwide does slightly better than the average car in greenhouse gas emissions. In 2018, transit emitted an average of about 198 grams of carbon dioxide per passenger mile, compared with 209 for the average car and 253 for the average light truck. However, transit numbers are heavily weighted by the New York urban area, where 44 percent of transit ridership takes place. According to the Department of Energy, electricity generated in New York State emits less than half the national average of carbon dioxide per kilowatt-hour, so New York transit's greenhouse gas emissions are unusually low.

On an urban-area basis, transit's greenhouse gas emissions are almost as bad as its energy consumption. Transit emits more greenhouse gases per passenger mile than the average automobile in 93 of the 100 largest urban areas and more than the average light truck in 90 of those urban areas. Transit is more greenhouse gas friendly than cars in just 8 of the nation's 488 urban areas, and more than light trucks in just 14.

These numbers count only the operating costs of energy and greenhouse gas emissions and are not a complete life-cycle analysis. Operationally, for example, rail transit is often more energy efficient and produces less greenhouse gases than buses or automobiles. But a full life-cycle analysis would produce very different results. One such analysis found that

the full life-cycle energy and greenhouse gas emissions from autos was 63 percent greater than the operational costs, but for rail transit it was 155 percent greater.⁴⁵

Construction of both rail and roads uses large amounts of energy and generates large amounts of greenhouse gases. But over their lifespans, urban highways carry far more passenger miles than typical rail transit lines, so the energy cost per passenger mile of rail transit ends up being higher.

For example, the environmental impact statement for the Interstate light-rail line in Portland estimated that the energy cost of construction would be 170 times the projected annual energy savings from operation.⁴⁶ Since ridership on that line is well short of expectations, the actual payback period will be even longer.⁴⁷ Even if the payback period were much shorter, since rail lines need reconstruction every 30 or 50 years, which requires nearly as much energy as the original construction, the annual savings will never repay the cost of construction and reconstruction.

TRANSIT SPENDING MAY SLOW URBAN GROWTH

Transit advocates often claim that transit stimulates urban development. But comparing transit capital spending with urban-area growth rates reveals that such stimulants are, at best, a zero-sum game. At most, all transit does is influence the *location* of new development, not the *amount*. Moreover, recent data indicate that urban areas that spend the most on transit improvements grow slower than ones that spend less.

Transit supporters often claim that the opening of new rail lines is frequently followed by billions of dollars of urban redevelopment. What they neglect to mention is that the redevelopment is often supported by subsidies of its own, such as tax-increment financing, sales of properties for less than market value, and direct grants to developers.

For example, the city of Portland has oriented all of its urban-renewal districts around

“The average car is more energy efficient than transit in 484 out of 488 urban areas.”

“The average car emits fewer greenhouse gases per passenger mile than transit in 478 out of 488 urban areas.”

Table 2

Transit, energy, and greenhouse gas emissions

Urban area	BTUs per passenger mile	CO ₂ , grams per passenger mile
New York	2,341	94
Los Angeles	4,218	287
Chicago	3,395	197
Miami	4,854	324
Philadelphia	4,435	210
Dallas–Ft. Worth	6,482	441
Houston	4,066	290
Washington	4,459	277
Atlanta	3,172	204
Boston	3,477	202
Detroit	4,601	326
Phoenix	5,296	389
San Francisco–Oakland	2,616	115
Seattle	4,101	280
San Diego	3,648	240
Minneapolis–St. Paul	4,479	300
Tampa–St. Petersburg	5,601	417
Denver–Boulder–Longmont	4,027	279
Baltimore	4,425	269
St. Louis	5,062	378
San Juan	4,483	314
Riverside–San Bernardino	7,231	581
Las Vegas	4,274	341
Portland	3,270	159
Cleveland	5,821	417
San Antonio	6,013	466
Pittsburgh	5,242	341
Sacramento	6,642	392
San Jose	4,531	264
Cincinnati	5,399	394
Kansas City	6,895	523
Orlando	5,000	370
Indianapolis	6,844	500
Virginia Beach	6,032	419
Milwaukee	5,329	389
Columbus	7,309	565
Austin	5,103	373

Charlotte	4,687	305
Providence	4,746	347
Jacksonville	6,514	488
Memphis	6,811	495
Salt Lake–Ogden–Provo	4,011	293
Louisville	5,101	372
Nashville	5,472	396
Richmond	4,397	344
Buffalo	4,875	309
Hartford	4,958	363
Bridgeport	5,671	413
New Orleans	6,598	488
Raleigh	6,156	443
Oklahoma City	5,971	449
Tucson	5,293	383
El Paso	4,714	390
Honolulu	2,746	200
Birmingham	6,944	566
Albuquerque	5,793	428
McAllen	4,631	335
Omaha	10,093	743
Dayton	4,957	356
Rochester NY	4,471	326
Allentown	6,068	452
Tulsa	6,466	515
Average All Transit	3,437	198
Average Car	2,890	205
Average Light Truck	3,389	241

Sources: BTUs [British thermal units] per passenger mile are calculated from the number of gallons and kilowatt-hours of fuel, as reported in "2018 National Transit Database," Federal Transit Administration.

https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/Funding%20Sources_2.xlsx

Note: Urban areas are ordered by population rank, from largest to smallest.

“At best, transit lines may influence the location of new developments, but don’t increase urban growth and so generate no new taxes that might help pay for the transit lines.”

its rail transit lines and, to subsidize development along those rail lines, it has issued nearly \$1.8 billion in bonds to be repaid out of tax-increment revenues.⁴⁸ That’s far from the only subsidy offered to developers: Portland’s regional planning agency, Metro, recently sold land appraised at \$6.4 million for just \$1,000 to a developer because the land was next to a light-rail station.⁴⁹

Valley Metro, Phoenix’s transit agency,

claims that its light-rail line has stimulated \$11 billion worth of new development. But a careful review of the list of developments supposedly stimulated by the rail line revealed that at least a third received government subsidies and most of the rest were government buildings. The light rail connects downtown Phoenix with the University of Arizona, and Valley Metro claimed that every new university building and every new downtown

“Growing auto ownership seems to be the main factor behind recent declines in transit ridership.”

government office building were the result of light rail. The supposedly transit-oriented developments included 70,000 parking spaces, an automobile dealership, and several gas stations.⁵⁰

Cities often follow rail construction with rezoning that favors redevelopment. In fact, one of the factors for rating federal transit capital improvement grants is the support that cities will provide for so-called transit-oriented developments.⁵¹ The FTA and other agencies have written entire books on how cities can subsidize and incentivize transit-supportive development.⁵²

Transit advocates argue that the taxes generated by new development will help pay for the rail lines. At best, however, rail lines influence the location of development within a region but not the region's overall growth rate, so no new taxes are generated.

To assess the effects of transit capital improvements on urban growth, I compared per capita capital expenditures in the 1990s (starting in 1992, the earliest year for which data are available) with population growth from 2000 to 2009, and per capita capital expenditures of that decade with population growth in the 2010s (through 2018). I made this comparison for the nation's 50 largest urban areas. Since some transit agencies serve multiple urban areas, I combined census data for the Boulder, Denver, and Longmont urban areas of Colorado and the Ogden, Provo, and Salt Lake City urban areas of Utah. Per capita capital expenditures in these urban areas ranged from under \$200 per year in Indianapolis, Kansas City, and Tampa–St. Petersburg to well over \$2,000 a year in New York, San Francisco–Oakland, and Seattle.

The correlations between capital improvements in one decade with population growth in the next were weak to nonexistent. A correlation of 1 or –1 is perfect; a correlation of less than 0.15 is no better than random.⁵³ The strongest correlation was between capital spending in the 1990s with population growth from 2000 to 2009, at –0.31, meaning that more spending correlated with *slower* growth.

The correlation between capital spending from 2000 to 2009 with population growth in the 2010s was 0.13. The correlation between spending in the 1990s with population growth in the 2010s was zero. Thus, spending more on transit doesn't boost growth and may even reduce it.

WHY IS RIDERSHIP DECLINING?

Many reasons have been offered to explain the steady decline in transit ridership over the past several years. These include transit's dilapidated infrastructure, cuts in transit service, slower transit speeds, growing car ownership, and the growth of ride-hailing services. All of these probably contribute in some ways, but one reason that has rarely been mentioned is probably more important than most of the others: the decline in the importance of downtown job centers.

Dilapidated infrastructure

As previously noted, the FTA estimates that the transit industry has about a \$100 billion state-of-good-repair backlog, and most of this is in the half-dozen cities with rail transit systems that are more than 40 years old: Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco–Oakland, and Washington. These systems suffer frequent accidents and delays, and this unreliability has discouraged transit ridership. While this helps explain ridership declines in those regions, it doesn't explain why ridership is declining in cities with newer rail systems or bus-only systems.

Transit service

Some writers have argued that transit ridership is dependent on the level of service: more service means more ridership, so declines in ridership must be due to declining service.⁵⁴ This may have been true at one time, but the relationship between service and ridership appears to have broken down. Between 2014 and 2019, Washington increased service (measured in vehicle-revenue miles) by 10 percent but lost 12 percent of its riders; Atlanta increased

service by 13 percent but lost 12 percent of its riders; Phoenix increased service by 22 percent but lost 9 percent of its riders. In fact, between 2014 and 2019, 30 out of the top 50 urban areas increased service but lost transit riders.⁵⁵ Not only is decreasing service not a primary reason for ridership declines, but spending money to increase service may simply be throwing good money after bad.

Slow speeds

The efforts by some transit agencies to blame declining transit use on slower speeds has already been mentioned. While this may be a problem in some areas, nationally it doesn't explain the decline in ridership. Between 2017 and 2018, the average speeds of conventional bus service and light rail both increased, yet both lost riders.

Growing auto ownership

As previously noted, a study in Southern California concluded that increasing auto ownership among low-income workers was a primary factor—if not the main reason—for declining ridership. Nationwide, the percentage of workers who live in households with no cars declined from 4.5 percent in 2014 to 4.3 percent in 2018. While that may seem small, when less than 5 percent of urban travel is by transit and 90 percent is by auto, a slight increase in auto ownership can translate into a relatively large decline in transit ridership. The significant decline in transit commuting among low-income people reported by the American Community Survey suggests that much of the increase in auto ownership is among such people. While this should be seen as a positive benefit of increasing wealth, transit agencies see it as an incursion into what they consider their captive customers.

Ride hailing

Ride hailing, using such services as Uber and Lyft, began to grow in 2014, about the same time that transit ridership began to decline. Most ride hailing isn't work-related, but ride hailing can explain why transit

commuting is declining while commuting by taxi (which is where ride hailing would appear in the American Community Survey) grew much more in 2018 than transit commuting declined. However, this doesn't explain why a few urban areas—most notably Seattle, but also Columbus, Oklahoma City, and a few others—seem to be exempt from the decline in transit ridership taking place almost everywhere else. The other event that happened after 2014 was a large drop in gasoline prices—prices in some areas fell by nearly 50 percent—which suggests that increased auto ownership and auto driving may be more responsible for transit decline than ride hailing.⁵⁶

Downtown jobs

Many people think that transit ridership depends on population densities, but the most important factor is the number of downtown jobs. This is because most transit systems primarily have hub-and-spoke routes centered on downtown, so most urban residents can get to a downtown job in one transit ride, while getting to a job somewhere else usually requires two or more transit rides.

Demographer Wendell Cox used 2010 census data to calculate the number of jobs in each of the downtowns in 52 major urban areas, using consistent criteria to define downtowns based on job densities in each census tract.⁵⁷ Using his numbers, the correlation between 2010 per capita transit ridership and downtown jobs in those 52 urban areas is 0.87, a strong positive correlation. For comparison, the correlation between per capita transit ridership and population densities in those same urban areas is 0.54, which is fairly high but nowhere near as high as that of downtown jobs.⁵⁸

Cox hasn't done a more recent analysis, but he did a similar calculation using 2000 census data, which can give us some sense of trends over time. His data indicate that the number of downtown jobs fell between 2000 and 2010 in 29 of the 47 urban areas that were on both lists. During that time, New York gained nearly a quarter of a million downtown jobs, while the other 46 downtowns

“The correlation between downtown jobs and transit ridership is much stronger than that between population density and ridership.”

“Uber and Lyft users in south Manhattan pay more per trip in taxes to support the subway system than subway riders themselves.”

collectively lost 100,000 jobs.⁵⁹

Even in downtown urban areas where the number of jobs grew, they didn't grow as fast as in the rest of those areas. In every urban area that is on both of Cox's lists, the downtowns' share of jobs declined between 2000 and 2010.⁶⁰ This is a continuation of trends since 1920, after which the trend toward land-intensive moving assembly lines led downtown factories to move to suburban areas where land was less expensive. Not coincidentally, per capita transit usage peaked in 1920 at 287 trips per urban resident (compared with 37 trips today). Downtowns' declining importance as regional job centers helps explain why transit is declining in so many areas.

As of 2010, only six urban areas—Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington—had more than 240,000 downtown jobs, and those six were also the only urban areas where transit carried more than 10 percent of commuters to work. Seattle stands out as the urban area whose transit ridership is growing the fastest when most others are declining, and that is because Seattle's downtown job numbers have been rapidly growing and recently reached the 240,000 threshold.

According to the Downtown Seattle Association, the number of jobs in downtown Seattle grew from 219,325 in 2010 to 313,589 in 2018, a 43 percent increase. Along the way, the number of downtown jobs first exceeded 240,000 in 2013, and not coincidentally 2013 was the first year in which the American Community Survey reported that more than 10 percent of Seattle-area workers commuted by transit.⁶¹ Downtown Seattle now has 48 percent of all the jobs in the city of Seattle, a higher percentage than any other major city in America—even Lower Manhattan has less than 45 percent of the jobs in New York City.⁶²

While all of these factors may have contributed to declining transit ridership in at least some urban areas, it seems likely that reductions in the number of downtown jobs and the increase of ride hailing services are the two most important causes of declining transit

ridership. Both of these issues are largely beyond the control of transit agencies.

POLICY RESPONSES

Some cities are taxing ride-hailing trips, based on the questionable claim that ride hailing is increasing traffic congestion. Uber and Lyft users in south Manhattan pay more per trip in taxes to support the subway system than subway riders themselves: starting in 2018, the tax on ride hailing is \$2.75 per ride, compared with average 2018 subway fares of \$1.33 per trip.⁶³ (Average fares are generally lower than published fares due to monthly passes and discounts for seniors, students, and others.) Starting in 2020, ride hailers in Chicago will pay a \$1.25 tax and for those in downtown Chicago the tax will be \$3; the average fare collected by the Chicago Transit Authority buses and trains was \$1.27 in 2018.⁶⁴

In fact, ride hailing is not a significant contributor to congestion. The claim that it does contribute to congestion is based on a 2015 report by transit advocate Bruce Schaller, who found that ride-hailing operators drive 2.8 miles for every mile they actually carry a passenger.⁶⁵ This led some reporters to conclude that Uber and Lyft increase traffic 180 percent in major cities.⁶⁶ In fact, the traffic increases from ride hailing are negligible. Even pro-transit *CityLab* admits that congestion is not Uber and Lyft's fault.⁶⁷

Schaller also estimated that ride hailing in nine major urban areas (Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco–Oakland, Seattle, and Washington) grew by 5.7 billion vehicle miles in 2017.⁶⁸ But according to the Federal Highway Administration, people drove 1.4 trillion vehicle miles in those urban areas in 2016, and the number declined slightly in 2017, so 5.7 billion isn't much of a contributor to congestion.⁶⁹ This is especially true as surveys indicate that most ride hailing takes place during non-rush-hour periods.⁷⁰

The claim that ride hailing increases congestion is merely an excuse to tax it and to

punish a competitor to transit. If transit were private, cities would be much less defensive of it.

Cities and transit agencies also have few tools to increase downtown jobs. Besides the seven previously noted urban areas, no other city is close to having 240,000 downtown jobs. The closest, Atlanta, had less than 175,000 jobs in 2010.

Seattle benefitted from Amazon's and Microsoft's decisions to locate tens of thousands of new jobs in downtown Seattle rather than the suburbs, where the companies were founded and headquartered. This decision may have been influenced by Seattle's urban-growth boundary, which has made land in the suburbs much more expensive than it would be without the boundary, thus making the downtown relatively more attractive.

While Seattle's growth-management policies may have contributed to the increase in transit ridership, they have come with severe costs. When measured by hours lost in traffic congestion, Seattle—the nation's 15th-largest urban area—is now the third-most congested urban area in the United States.⁷¹ Seattle also went from being one of the most affordable housing markets in the country in 1985, when King County first drew an urban-growth boundary, to one of the least-affordable housing markets today.⁷²

Cities and transit agencies are also actively seeking to increase urban densities, especially along transit corridors, by subsidizing high-density development along those corridors and, in many cases, deliberately creating artificial shortages of low-density housing. But surveys show that most people living in such developments drive almost as much as people living elsewhere in the same urban areas, so this strategy has been a failure. Beyond that, this strategy violates people's freedom to choose the kind of housing they prefer.

As previously noted, another transit agency tactic is to persuade cities to convert general purpose traffic lanes to dedicated bus lanes. This simultaneously speeds buses and penalizes auto drivers. Advocates claim that every

bus deserves its own lane.⁷³ This, however, is based on the assumption that buses are somehow more environmentally sound than autos, when in fact buses use far more energy and emit far more greenhouse gases per passenger mile than autos. The reality is that, even with congestion, automobiles are faster and more convenient than transit, so policies that increase congestion just waste people's time without significantly changing travel habits.

A REALISTIC LOOK AT TRANSIT'S FUTURE

The recent declines in transit ridership are a continuation of trends that began before 1920: the most important of these are the increasing levels of auto ownership and the migration of jobs and people to the suburbs. Even ride hailing is just a 21st-century version of the jitneys that threatened streetcar companies in the mid-1910s.⁷⁴ Seattle's experience notwithstanding, all of these trends appear to be irreversible in the long run.

The main reasons that have been given for subsidizing transit—providing transit to lower-income people, reducing environmental costs, and relieving congestion—are obsolete:

- Large numbers of low-income people no longer rely on transit, and, in fact, increasing auto ownership has helped lift many people out of poverty because automobiles provide them with access to far more jobs and other economic opportunities than transit does.
- In all but a handful of urban areas, transit consumes more resources and does more harm to the environment than driving.
- Outside of New York and perhaps a half-dozen other urban areas, transit does little to relieve traffic congestion and may even increase it because dedicated transit lanes and railcars that frequently delay vehicles at grade crossings do more to increase congestion than to reduce it.
- Even if transit could achieve any of its

“Since 1965, total subsidies to transit have exceeded \$1.4 trillion, of which at least a third has come from the federal government.”

“Transit agencies should stop building new rail lines and, outside of New York, should replace rails with buses as the rails wear out.”

high-minded goals, throwing money at transit has failed to get people out of their cars. The number of transit trips taken by the average urban resident has declined from 62 in 1964, the year Congress started extending federal subsidies to transit, to 36 trips in 2019.⁷⁵

Federal subsidies to transit are especially questionable because most transit agencies do not engage in interstate commerce. When Congress passed a law in 1958 making it easier for railroads to cancel intercity passenger trains that cross state lines, several railroads proposed to also cancel commuter trains. This led Congress to pass the Urban Mass Transit Act of 1964, which offered federal funds to help states keep such trains operating. At the time, the justification for this was that some of the commuter trains serving Boston, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia crossed state lines. But Congress extended its funding offer to any state or local government that operated transit services. In 1964, most transit was private and the industry as a whole was profitable, but within a decade it was almost entirely taken over by state or local governments and had become highly *unprofitable*. Today, the vast majority of federal dollars allocated for transit go to transit agencies that do not cross state lines.

Since 1965, federal, state, and local governments have spent close to \$900 billion (in 2018 dollars) subsidizing transit operations, more than \$100 billion of which has come from the federal government. Early records of capital spending are incomplete, but since 1988 the federal government has provided more than \$350 billion (in 2018 dollars) in capital subsidies to transit, out of \$450 billion spent by the transit industry. Total subsidies have therefore been well over \$1.4 trillion, of which at least a third has come from the federal government.⁷⁶

Transit will clearly remain important in the New York metropolitan area. The question is: How will the region pay for it? The Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) long-term debt is more than \$43 billion.⁷⁷ Its maintenance

backlog is \$60 billion.⁷⁸ Its unfunded health care liability is more than \$20 billion.⁷⁹ Despite not having funds to close these gaps, the agency is planning to spend \$13 billion extending the Second Avenue Subway another six miles at a cost of \$2.2 billion per mile. As then MTA vice president Dave Henley admitted in 2009, “There will never be enough money” to put the system in a state of good repair.⁸⁰

Beyond New York City, New Jersey Transit needs \$29 billion for the Gateway project that would rebuild century-old tunnels under the Hudson River and bridges near those tunnels. New Jersey's congressional delegation would like the federal government to pay half of this cost and to loan the states the other half, with no revenue source in sight to repay the loan—a plan that is opposed by the Trump administration.⁸¹ Even if the federal government ultimately provides some funding, it doesn't seem likely that enough money will be ever found to completely restore the region's transit systems.

New York City's densities cannot be supported without transit, particularly the subway system. Buses running on the city's surface streets simply cannot move as many people as 10-car subway trains that run up to 30 times per hour. Unless New York finds a way to fund its transit, it may have to accept lower population and job densities and a wholesale movement of residences and offices to the suburbs.

Outside of New York, buses can replace most rail lines in the country and actually move more people per hour in the same amount of real estate. This is because, for safety reasons, rail lines can typically move no more than 20 railcars or trains per hour in mixed traffic (such as streetcars or light rail) and no more than 30 per hour in dedicated rights of way (such as subways), while a single bus lane can easily move hundreds of buses per hour. For example, Istanbul has an exclusive busway that moves more than 250 buses per hour, despite each bus stopping at 33 stations en route. While each bus has a lower capacity than a train, the increased number of vehicles per hour means the Istanbul Metrobus has an

estimated capacity of 30,000 people an hour—more than almost any rail line in the United States outside of New York City.⁸²

Transit agencies should do several things in response to ridership declines. First, they should stop planning and building new rail transit lines. Buses can move more people per hour than most trains, at a far lower cost, and no city outside of New York has the job concentrations that would require a subway system.⁸³

Second, as existing rail lines wear out, transit agencies should replace them with buses. This would save billions of dollars in capital replacement costs.

To save money operating those buses, transit agencies could contract out all bus operations to private companies. Several companies, including First Transit and Veolia, compete for such business, giving them incentives to keep their costs low. By Colorado state law, Denver's Regional Transit District (RTD) must contract out half of all of its bus services. The contractors are unionized and pay taxes that RTD is exempted from. The contracted half of the service costs taxpayers just 52 percent as much, per vehicle revenue mile, as the half that is operated by RTD.⁸⁴ Contracting out transit services in the seven urban areas where transit carries more than 10 percent of commuters could save taxpayers close to \$4 billion a year.

An even better solution would be to privatize transit. This would result in the concentration of transit services in dense cities and near job centers, where people use it the most, but the reduction or elimination of services in low-density suburbs, where relatively few people rely on transit.

A number of private companies, including Bridj and Chariot, have attempted to enter U.S. transit markets but were unable to compete against heavily subsidized public

transit systems.⁸⁵ In San Francisco, San Jose, and Seattle, major employers such as Apple, Google, and Microsoft provide private transit for their employees, which indicates that public transit systems in those regions aren't working very well.⁸⁶ Privatization would lead to transit going where people need it, not where politicians want it.

Congress should start by abolishing the transit capital improvement grant (New Starts) program, which encourages transit agencies to waste money building expensive, and generally obsolete, infrastructure that they won't be able to afford to maintain. The one strategy that transit agencies have successfully used to increase ridership is to redesign their bus systems, something that can't be easily done with fixed-rail systems. This limitation alone is a strong argument against new rail construction.

Next, Congress should phase out other federal subsidies to transit and end federal subsidies to highways. The Highway Trust Fund was originally created to collect funds from highway users and spend those funds on highways. As such, it was at least a weakly effective mimic of markets. Since 1982, however, Congress has increasingly diverted a share of the funds to transit and supplemented both highway and transit funds with general funds. In the long run, there is probably no need for the federal government to be involved with highways or transit. In the short run, Congress can at least ensure that funds collected by the federal government from highway users—and no other funds—go to highways.

A century ago, transit was a vital part of American urban economies. At least outside of New York City, that is no longer true. It's time to stop wasting \$5.4 billion a year pretending that it is.

“Congress should abolish the New Starts program that encourages transit agencies to build expensive and obsolete infrastructure.”

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September 8, 2025

This is not about the blue tape anymore

This all could have been avoided

Jim Ray made several attempts to communicate his concern over the safety hazard the blue tape was causing, he was ignored and ridiculed

In his final attempt, he was laughed at and told he could remove the tape before each class as long as he put it back after. He was mocked & ultimately ran out

Jim Ray was bullied

Bullying is when people repeatedly and intentionally use words or actions against someone or a group of people to cause distress and risk to their wellbeing.

This is about the Clovis Senior Activity Center management disregard for their employees, specifically one of their most loyal longest standing "senior" employees.

This is about humanity, community & working as a "team". Which was a term management used constantly while trying to justify their bad decision of turning a dance floor and room into a pickleball court (which is too small).

Jims classes were growing quickly after moving back to the old senior center in April. Jim asked for additional time slots for more classes. One time slot in particular was Wednesday evening. He was told on MAY 19th "Wednesday evening is not available, we have pickleball"

Now Tammy & John are scheduled for Wednesday evenings 6-9pm.

This is about discrimination.

Go to Jims facebook page and youtube pages (over 13k subscribers). Tell me this looks like a man who was ready to retire, without notice.

It wasn't until we went to Council on the 2nd that anything was taken seriously about the tape on the floor.

Yes, Jim acted on his emotions, he's human too and he has feelings. Do you blame him?

Jim has been replaced. But for only 2 of his 7 classes, not including Friday night dance which brought in an average of \$185 per week, almost 10k annually.

Jim rescinded his retirement from Calpers on September 4th. On September 5th he sent Bethany a message asking to return to work on Sunday the 7th. She did not respond. He then went to HR and was told he was not going to be hired back.

No one was concerned about the well being of Jim Ray. No effort was made to contact him.

My name is Bill Scott. I live at 341 Evergreen.

I am asking the Clovis City Council to consider a proposal, to adopt and proudly display the motto, "IN GOD WE TRUST". This motto is not only our nations motto, it has recently been adopted by the City of Fresno, and just three weeks ago, by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors. I have some remarks, followed by Kathy Reinhardt. We are joined by **EIGHTEEN** citizens, and we have **72** signatures and 76 positive reactions from Nextdoor, supporting us. This has been gathered in only one week.

There is a reason this motto was adopted by our nation. It represents the mutual trust our citizens and leaders have in each other. John Adams famously said, "Our Constitution was written only for a moral and religious people, to all others it is wholly inadequate". Our Declaration of Independence, and our constitution, acknowledge that our rights come from our Creator. But, with those rights come the responsibility to act within His morality. This morality is embodied in the Ten Commandments. This mutual trust is based on myself, and all other citizens, holding ourselves accountable to our Creator. To give up our sins in order to feel comfortable in the presence of God. Negating the need for a large powerful government. In return, we can then expect our leaders to govern in ways that do not interfere with, or hamper our right to live as we desire. We trust you to NOT allow money or power to influence your limited authority over us.

There are some whom do not believe in God. They may not like this. However, it is necessary our society operate under some kind of morality. If not Gods morality, then who's morality will we adopt. That question is addressed in our Declaration of Independence, and codified in our Constitution. We chose God's morality over a Kings morality. Laws will be based on one or the other. You cannot have your own morality; it must come from a higher source. If you can make your own then, you can also change it, to suit your needs. Gods' morality is unchangeable, you can accept it, and try to live up to it. Or you can deny it, giving up God to feel comfortable in your sins. That decision creates chaos and the need for an authoritarian government. The relationship between government leaders and its citizens is enhanced when both mutually pledge trust in God.

Therefore, I ask the City of Clovis to adopt the moto, "IN GOD WE TRUST", and display it in council chambers.

The basis of God's connection to the United States government and its establishment can be attributed to several historical and ideological factors. The Founding Fathers' religious beliefs, **the moral and ethical foundations of the nation**, and the cultural and historical context of the United States all contributed to the acknowledgment of God in various aspects of American society, including government symbolism and rhetoric.

The motto has faced criticism and legal challenges. Despite these challenges, courts have often ruled that the phrase is a form of "ceremonial deism" **and does not constitute a direct endorsement of religion**

The motto has become a symbol of American identity, often associated with the nation's values and beliefs. It reflects a historical intertwining of religion and politics in the U.S., with many Americans viewing it as a recognition of the role of faith in public life.

The phrase "In God We Trust" first appeared on U.S coins during the Civil War, specifically on the two-Cent piece minted in 1864. The introduction of the phrase was largely influenced by a letter from Reverend M.R. Watkins to Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase, to include a reference to God on currency to boost morale of Union soldiers and signify the nation's reliance on divine protection during war.

The motto was officially adopted as the national motto in 1956 and has been **inscribed on all U.S currency since 1957**, following a law passed by Congress in 1955 that mandated its inclusion on paper money.

The House of Representatives has a long-standing tradition of displaying the motto "In God We Trust" on its chamber doors. This practice has been in place since at least 1962, when the sign was installed above the rostrum inside the House Chamber. The sign has been a symbol of the House's commitment to the nation's spiritual values and has been a source of pride for many members and visitors.

The House of Representatives continues to honor the motto as a reflection of the nation's spiritual heritage and a reminder of the importance of faith in the pursuit of freedom and democracy.

In conclusion, "In God We Trust" serves as a reflection of the United States' historical context, cultural identity, and ongoing debates about the role of religion in political life. Its adoption and continued presence on currency highlights the complex relationship between faith and national identity in America.

Petition to Display National Motto "In God We Trust" in Clovis Council Chambers

Petition summary and background

The motto has become a symbol of American identity, often associated with the nation's values & beliefs. It reflects a historical intertwining of religion & politics in the U.S., with many Americans viewing it as a recognition of the role of faith in public life. The motto was adopted in 1956 with roots tracing back to the Civil War and reflecting a complex relationship between religion and American identity.

Action petitioned for

The petition is a request by citizens of Clovis to display the U.S. national motto in the Clovis City Council Chambers

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Jared Hash	Jared Hash	88. n Dewitt		9/2
Vincent Diak	Vincent Diak	1625 TOLLHOUSE LN.		9/2
RIN SANDQUIST	Rin Sandquist	68 N. Dewitt, Clovis #7		9/2
Cammie Gilbert	Cammie Gilbert	90 W. 9 th St Clovis 93612		9/2
Kevin Ortiz	Kevin Ortiz	824 Agua Dulce Ave		9/2
CARL DEWEY	Carl Dewey	Clovis CA 93619 198 OAK CLOVIS CA 93611		9/2
ERIC WOODS	Eric Woods	CLOVIS CA 93619 6299 N BATAAN AVE		9/2
Dan Winiecke	Dan Winiecke	CLOVIS, CA 93611 159 N. McKeiv		9/2
Chet Hartley	Chet Hartley	4895 N Windward Way Clovis 93619		9/2
Bruce Gruver	Bruce Gruver	1688 Goshue Ave CLOVIS CA 93611		9/2
Brian Wilson	Brian Wilson	469 Burgon Ave CLOVIS CA 93611		9/2/2

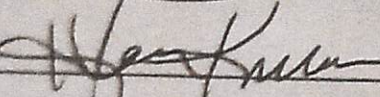
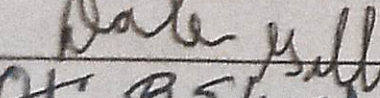
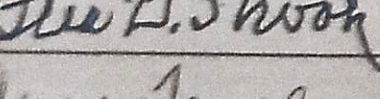
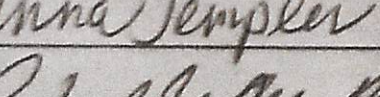
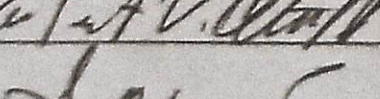
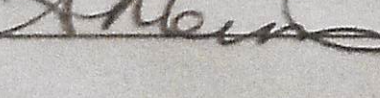
Petition to Display National Motto "In God We Trust" in Clovis Council Chambers

Petition summary and background

Action petitioned for

The motto has become a symbol of American identity, often associated with the nation's values & beliefs. It reflects a historical intertwining of religion & politics in the U.S., with many Americans viewing it as a recognition of the role of faith in public life. The motto was adopted in 1956 with roots tracing back to the Civil War and reflecting a complex relationship between religion and American identity.

The petition is a request by citizens of Clovis to display the U.S. national motto in the Clovis City Council Chambers.

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Carol O'Brien		3034 Applegate Ave Clovis 93611		9/2/8
~~Heidi B...~~	~~~~	~~9207 N. Dugan Clovis 93619~~		
Heidi B...		9207 N. Dugan Clovis 93619		9-2-
Dylon Kaufman		1677 Tollhouse Ln		9-2-
Nathan Meyer		2424 Saugle Ave Clovis		9-2-
Dale Gillespie		1435 Wrenwood Ave		9-5-
Otis B. Shook		314 Mennewa Ave		9-5-
Anna Templer		1154 Paul Ave Clovis 93612		9-5-
Bob ALTHOFF		10137 E HERRINGTON Clovis 93611		9-5-
Amy Morris		1757 Jordan Clovis 93611		9/5

Printed Name	Signature	Address	City	Comment	Date
Eric Rollins	Eric Rollins	575 W Ashcroft	CA		9/2/25
Bill Scott	Bill Scott	341 RIVERGREEN			9/2/25
Katherine Reinhardt	Katherine Reinhardt	3021 CARSON AVE	LOUIS		9/3/25
Catherine Gino	Catherine Gino	1786 Donner Ave	CLAVIS		9/3/25
Brent Burdine	Brent Burdine	497 W. KEATS	CA		9/3/25
Betha Mays	Betha Mays	1614 HALLWAY AVE	APT 105		9/3/25
Nancy Henderson	Nancy Henderson	22793 Homestead Rd	CLAVIS 93619		9/3/25
Barbara Simons	Barbara Simons	51 Barstow			9/3/25
Martha Witt	Martha Witt	3402 Pollocky	CA	93612	9/4/25
Peggy Robbins	Peggy Robbins	2216 Peach Ave #1		93612	9/4/25
Sarah Sauer	Sarah Sauer	919 Miami Ave		93611	9-5-25
Lois Mathew	Lois Mathew	3636 Agua Dulce	CA	93619	9-5-25
MICHAEL DIXSON	Michael Dixon	4315 E COPPER AVE		93619	9-5-25
Jeann Howard	Jeann Howard	274 Cherry Ln		93612	9-5-25
Marjorie Henry	Marjorie Henry	2401 Pico Ave		93611	9-5-25
Lynn Reinhardt	Lynn Reinhardt	3021 CARSON AVE		93611	9-5-25

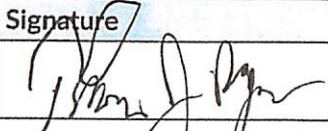
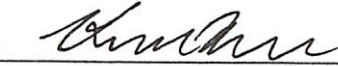
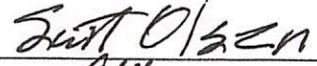
Petition to Display the National Motto "In God We Trust" in Clovis City Council Chambers

Petition summary and background	The motto has become a symbol of American identity, often associated with the nation's values & beliefs. It reflects a historical intertwining of religion & politics in the U.S., with many Americans viewing it as a recognition of the role of faith in public life. The motto was adopted in 1956, with roots tracing back to the Civil War and reflecting a complex relationship between religion and American identity.
Action petitioned for	We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now to display the U.S. national motto "In God We Trust" in the Clovis City Council Chambers.

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
CHIP WIPFLER	ONLINE	376 BURL Clovis 93611		0904
SANDY + ADAM HUMANN	ONLINE	11568 E BULLARD 93619		0904
RANDY BOOTH	ONLINE	114 N FOWLER ^{#128} 93611		0904
GAIL SCOTT	ONLINE	3134 MITCHELL 93619		0904
JAMIE PERILLO	ONLINE	412 SAN JOSE 93612		0904
MARY ANALLA	ONLINE	P.O. BOX 3474 93613		0904

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Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Thomas J. Ryan		6315 N. Stanton Rd		9/7/25
Ron Neault		472 LAVERNE AVE		9/7/25
Royce Hansen	RWH	1470 4th St		9/7/25
KEVIN MERRILL		2687 N. SHADOWER BL.		9-7-25
Scott Olson		1904 2nd ALTO		9-7-25
Mark Brown		2544 Escalon Ave.		9/7/25
Kelly Schofield		6262 N. Montana Ave. Clovis		9/7/25
Robert Schofield		6262 N. Montana, Clovis		9/7/25
RAY RAMOS		2756 Palo Alto Ave Clovis		9.7.25
Ryan Buss		6732 N. Duval		9/7/25

Petition to Display the National Motto "In God We Trust" in Clovis City Council Chambers

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Action petitioned for	We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now to display the U.S. national motto "In God We Trust" in the Clovis City Council Chambers.

[illegible]

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Action petitioned for	We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now to display the U.S. national motto "In God We Trust" in the Clovis City Council Chambers.

[illegible]

Petition to Display the National Motto "In God We Trust" in Clovis City Council Chambers

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Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Kay Errotabere	Kay Errotabere	56 W El Paso Clovis	Great idea!	9/4/25
Steve	Steve	56 W. EL PASO AVE	WITHOUT A DOUBT	9/4/25
Irene Morgan	Irene Morgan	955 N. Fairfax Ave., Clovis		9/4/25
Sharon Isackson	Sharon Isackson	66 W El Paso	Absolutely!	9/4/25
CARL ISACKSON	Carl Isal	" "	"	9/4/25
PAUL HINKLE	Paul Hinkle	434 W MANLO, CLOVIS	GOOD IDEA	9-4-25
DONALD WAGNER	Donald Wagner	255 W TENAYA AVE	YES	9-4-25
OLIVIA HINKLE	Olivia Hinkle	434 W Manlo, Clovis	Yes!	9-4-25
Jim Smith	Jim Smith	1275 Park Ave	Yes	9-5-25
Jim Mulholland	Jim Mulholland	501 But Ave Clovis	Should have been there already	9/5/25

Denise Huffman Denise Huffman 2310 Dawson Cove Ln S Clovis 9-5-25
 Dawn Arii Dawn Arii 1506 Lincoln Ave Clovis CA 93612 9-7-25
 Dolores Crisp Dolores Crisp 2236 Robertwood Ave Clovis Yes 9-8-25



CITY of CLOVIS
— CLOVIS CITY COUNCIL —

California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Comments on Proposed Amendments to Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF)

Dear Chair and Members of the Board,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the proposed amendments to the Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) regulation. We share the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) commitment to cleaner air and protecting public health. As a community in the San Joaquin Valley, the most polluted air basin in the United States, our region takes seriously its responsibility to improve air quality for our residents.

That said, we urge CARB to adopt a more realistic implementation timeline that aligns with the current maturity of the zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) industry and enables the delivery of viable heavy-duty options suitable for public agency fleets. Flexibility in implementation is critical to avoid undermining the ultimate goals of clean air and greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions by 2045.

Current regulatory frameworks disproportionately burden public fleets, while private sector exemptions persist, creating an uneven playing field and reduced market demand for needed vehicles. Without adequate flexibility, public agencies may incur untenable operational costs, potentially forcing privatization of essential services such as solid waste and transit. Private operators, however, are not bound by the same timelines or public service mandates. This imbalance increases the risk that California may miss its 2045 GHG and air quality targets.

We also caution against overreliance on exemptions as realistic solutions that provide for a well planned implementation. Exemptions tied to infrastructure readiness are challenging. Agencies cannot accurately forecast power needs before utility plans are finalized, and multi-year lead-times from utilities are typical in our experience. In addition, the City is at financial risk posed by mandatory power allotment purchases, even if unused, to get the necessary infrastructure installed. We respectfully request CARB directly coordinate with utilities to streamline these critical infrastructure issues.

Regarding ZEV purchase exemptions, specialized vehicles (e.g. solid waste, vacuum trucks) frequently lack functional zero-emission equivalents. Public agencies must have the ability to request exemptions where no legitimate ZEV alternative exists. Similarly, daily usage exemptions are difficult to implement due to absent benchmark ZEV performance data in certain sectors.

Transit systems have shouldered early transition mandates despite the insufficient reliability of current ZEV bus technology. We have participated in pilot programs that underscore these challenges, as the ZEV buses were not usable to serve our customers. These ZEV transit vehicles have unproven long-term reliability significant and costly maintenance burdens. Public transit serves as a foundational infrastructure that enables seniors and individuals with limited income to access education, healthcare, and other essential services. Imposing mandates may prematurely jeopardize these critical connections.

We are also deeply concerned about the financial burden the proposed regulatory timeline imposes, which staff have at times minimized. The impact on ratepayers, including household and commercial utility bills, must be documented transparently as it could be significant. There is a real risk of driving local businesses out of California and disproportionately harming seniors, young families, and lower-income households.

Our proposed path forward includes:

- Realistic timelines that reflect technology development and infrastructure readiness;
- Meaningful exemptions where technology or unreasonable cost barriers persist;
- State-mandated coordination with utilities to relieve local agencies' administrative and risk burdens; and
- Clear financial support mechanisms, including grants, to protect ratepayers and communities.

We look forward to CARB's continued engagement.

Thank you for your leadership and attention to these critical issues.

Sincerely,

Vong Mouanoutoua
Mayor, City of Clovis