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# TRANSIT NEWS

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## **\$5 a Gallon Gas Could Spur Up to 1.5 Billion Additional Passenger Trips On U.S. Public Transportation Systems**

*Congress needs to provide long-term investment in public transit to address impending demand*

**Washington, DC-** A study released today by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) predicts that as gasoline prices continue increasing, Americans will turn to public transportation in record numbers. APTA is calling on Congress to address this impending demand by providing a greater long-term investment in public transportation.

The analysis reveals if regular gas prices reach \$4 a gallon across the nation, as many experts have forecasted, an additional 670 million passenger trips could be expected, resulting in more than 10.8 billion trips per year. If pump prices jump to \$5 a gallon, the report predicts an additional 1.5 billion passenger trips can be expected, resulting in more than 11.6 billion trips per year. And if prices were to soar to \$6 a gallon, expectations go as high as an additional 2.7 billion passenger trips, resulting in more than 12.9 billion trips per year.

“The volatility of the price at the pump is another wake up call for our nation to address the increasing demand for public transportation services,” said APTA President William Millar. “We must make significant, long-term investments in public transportation or we will leave our fellow Americans with limited travel options, or in many cases, stranded without travel options. Public transit is the quickest way for people to beat high gas prices if it is available.”

Many of the public transit systems across the country are already seeing large ridership increases, some reaching double digits in the month of February. For instance; the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority in Pompano Beach, FL increased by 10.6 percent; Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority of Philadelphia, PA increased by 10 percent; The Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority of Oakland, CA increased by 14 percent and Triangle Transit of Research Triangle Park, NC increased by 22.8 percent.

“We saw this same story in 2008 and several times before where high gas prices caught our country without adequate travel options,” said Millar. “However, this time we can write a happy ending and make sure investment is made to expand public transportation so that more Americans have a choice in how they travel.”

APTA supports the Obama Administration's transportation authorization blueprint and proposal which increases public transit investment by 128 percent over the next six years. This type of investment would help close the gap for the 46 percent of Americans who do not have access to public transportation.

APTA is encouraging riders to tell Congress they need more transportation options by going to [publictransportation.org](http://publictransportation.org) or text TRANSIT to 86677 and join the "I <3 (heart) transit campaign."

The projected estimates use the 2010 APTA Public Transportation Ridership Report as a baseline. The ridership is then increased by the reported elasticity multiplied by the projected price change to show ridership growth at a given increase above the average price for regular gasoline as reported in the last 2010 report by the Energy Information Administration of the U.S. Department of Energy.

A copy of the report can be found at [www.apta.com](http://www.apta.com).

**Below is a sampling of systems that have reported increases in ridership in 2011, starting with those systems that have seen double digit increases. Please note that not all systems have February figures yet.**

**Durham, NC** – Durham Area Transit Authority saw a 14.8% increase in ridership in January and a 21.8% increase in February.

**Fort Wright, KY** – Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky saw an increase of 3.6% in January, which jumped to a 10.3% in February.

**Lafayette, IN** – CityBus of Greater Lafayette saw an increase in ridership of 12.6% in January.

**Oakland, CA** – Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority saw double digit increases in ridership in January (11%) and February (14%).

**Orlando, FL** – LYNX saw a 10.7% increase in January.

**Philadelphia, PA** – SEPTA saw a 10% increase in February, up from 2% in January.

**Pompano Beach, FL** – South Florida Regional Transportation Authority saw an increase of ridership of 6% in January and a double digit increase of 10.6% in February.

**Research Triangle Park, NC** – Triangle Transit saw a 17.7% increase of ridership in January and a 22.8% increase in February.

**Salt Lake City, UT** – Utah Transit Authority had a 12% ridership increase in January and a 4.3% ridership increase in February.

**San Antonio, TX** – VIA Metropolitan Transit's Express bus service had an 18% increase in ridership in January.

**San Diego, CA** – Metropolitan Transit System had a 7.3% increase in bus ridership and a 13% ridership increase in trolley ridership for January.

**Tampa, FL** – Hillsborough Area Regional Transit had an 18% increase in ridership in January and a 19% ridership increase in February.

**Wenatchee, WA** – Link Transit saw a 20.8% increase in ridership in January and 12.4% ridership increase in February.

**Other systems that have reported ridership increases in 2011 include:**

**Arlington Heights, IL** – Pace Suburban Bus saw an increase of 6.5% in January.

**Cincinnati, OH** – Metro saw an increase in ridership of 1% in January and that rose to a ridership increase of 5% in February.

**Cleveland, OH** – Greater Cleveland RTA's total rail ridership was up 7% and heavy rail ridership was up 11% in January.

**Columbus, OH** - Central Ohio Transit Authority saw an 8.3% increase in January.

**Fort Myers, FL** – Lee County Transit saw ridership increase by 4.9% in January and by 8.5% in February.

**Fort Worth, TX** – Fort Worth Transportation Authority saw an increase in ridership of 3.6% in January.

**Kansas City, MO** - Kansas City Area Transportation Authority saw an increase in ridership of 2.6% in January.

**Los Angeles, CA** - Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. With some of the highest gas prices in the nation, LA Metro saw a 4.6% jump in ridership in January. (LA Metro is planning buying the historic Union Station to enhance it for future expected growth in transit ridership with new rail lines being built, including high-speed rail.)

**Louisville, KY** – Transit Authority of River City saw an overall increase of 4% in January. Additionally, TARC added buses on our two most popular routes in February and they are showing big gains --- 14 percent on one route and 15 percent on the other route.

**Minneapolis, MN** – Metro Transit saw an overall increase of 2.25%, but commuter rail is up 7.8%. Also, the number of **individuals** visiting the Metro Transit web site for the first two months of the year are up 18% over Jan/Feb last year (179,382 avg./mo in 2011). Additionally, the number of **visits** to our web site for the first two months of the year are up 31% over Jan/Feb last year (586,199 avg./mo in 2011).

**Muncie, IN** – Muncie Indiana Transit System saw an increase in ridership of 8.1% in January.

**Oakland, CA** – Bay Area Rapid Transit saw an increase in ridership in January of 4.8% and increase in February of 3.7%.

**Olympia, WA** – Intercity Transit saw an increase of 3% in January. Also, Intercity Transit is witnessing a surge in vanpool ridership, in the first 2 months of 2011.

**Oxnard, CA** – Gold Coast Transit’s total ridership for the month of January was up 3.0.

**Painesville, OH** – Laketran saw an increase of 3% in ridership in January.

**San Antonio, TX** – VIA Metropolitan Transit’s Express Bus service had an 18% increase in ridership in January.

**San Diego, CA** – Metropolitan Transit System saw a 2.8% increase in bus ridership and a 6% increase in trolley ridership for February.

**Springfield, MO** – City Utilities of Springfield, MO had a 9% increase for January.

**Wilmington, DE** - Delaware Transit Corporation had an increase of nearly 8% in January.

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*The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is a nonprofit international association of more than 1,500 public and private member organizations, engaged in the areas of bus, paratransit, light rail, commuter rail, subways, waterborne passenger services, and high-speed rail. This includes: transit systems; planning, design, construction, and finance firms; product and service providers; academic institutions; transit associations and state departments of transportation. More than 90 percent of the people using public transportation in the United States and Canada are served by APTA member systems.*