

"Pushing on a String"

Eye-opening REALITIES of **Public Transportation DECLINE**.
PSTA . . . 20% decline in 4 years exceeds national rate.

Mass transit is collapsing everywhere | TheHill

<https://thehill.com/opinion/campaign/387498-mass-transit-is-collapsing-everywhere>

May 13, 2018 - Following three years of steady declines, these numbers present a dire picture of the nation's transit industry.

Falling transit ridership poses an 'emergency' for cities,

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/.../falling-transit-ridership.../ffb67c28-2865-11e8-874...>

Mar 24, 2018 - Transit ridership fell in 31 of 35 major metropolitan areas in the United States last year,

Charting Public Transit's Decline

Cato Institute, *By [Randal O'Toole](#), November 8, 2018*

(46 References)

<https://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/charting-public-transits-decline>

- "Nationwide transit ridership has declined steadily since 2014, with large urban areas, including Atlanta, Miami, and Los Angeles, losing more than 20 percent of their transit riders."
- "I call it the transit death spiral," says Darrell Johnson, CEO, California's Orange County Transportation Authority. "It's a never-ending pattern."
- "The supposed social, environmental, and economic development benefits of transit are negligible to nonexistent. Federal, state, and local governments should withdraw subsidies to transit and allow private operators to take over where the demand still justifies mass transit operations."

CONCLUSION

Rapidly improving technologies have left Americans familiar with the replacement of old technologies with new ones. Word processors replaced typewriters; pocket calculators replaced slide rules; cell phones are replacing landline phones, which replaced the telegraph; online movie streaming replaced video stores; and so forth.

Only in passenger transportation — urban transit and intercity passenger trains — is the government trying to halt such technology replacement through government ownership and subsidies. Yet those efforts are failing, which calls into question why they were needed in the first place.

To deal with declining revenues, transit agencies are asking legislators and voters for increased subsidies. But growing subsidies have already failed to counter the forces causing transit decline: moderate fuel prices; dispersion of jobs; increasing auto ownership; and most recently, competition from ride-hailing companies.

Transit is not going to relieve traffic congestion, save energy, or reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions if ridership is declining. Nor is transit needed to help most low-income workers, as nearly all of them have access to cars, while people who can't drive can use ride hailing or other alternatives.

Transit advocates argue that all transportation is subsidized, so transit shouldn't be judged by the subsidies it receives. It is true that some other forms of are subsidized, and the case for those subsidies is usually just as weak. But no other form of transportation is as heavily subsidized as transit, which gets more than **70 times the subsidies** per passenger mile as highways, roads, and streets. Rather than dump tens of billions of dollars a year on transit, it would make more sense to end subsidies to other forms of transportation.

The decline in transit ridership despite steadily increasing subsidies only shows that transit is obsolete and irrelevant in all but a handful of urban areas. Without subsidies, private transit will spring up in areas that really need it. But the subsidies are merely a drain on the national and local economies without providing any social, environmental, or economic benefits. In short, all of the justifications that have been used for subsidizing transit have disappeared, and those subsidies should be terminated or phased out.

WALL STREET JOURNAL ~ “Transit Fantasies”

[Albuquerque's Electric Bus Takes a Wrong Turn and Goes](#)

[Nowhere](#)

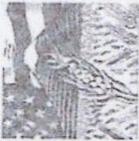
By Stephen Ford, March 29, 2019 <https://www.wsj.com/articles/albuquerques-electric-bus-takes-a-wrong-turn-and-goes-nowhere-11553899172?mod=searchresults&page=1&pos=1>

Advocates force **businesses to suffer** along historic Route 66 while they indulge their **transit fantasies**.

Whether it's the Washington DC streetcar, California's bullet train, or New York's Second Avenue subway, public-transit are almost always disruptive, delayed, over budget, or **underused** — if not all of the above.

Add another example to the list: A dead-end bus line in Albuquerque.

Albuquerque's Electric Bus Takes a Wrong Turn and Goes Nowhere



CROSS COUNTRY
By Stephen Ford

Whether it's the Washington, D.C., streetcar, California's bullet train, or New York's Second Avenue subway, public-transit projects are almost always disruptive, delayed, over budget or underused—if not all of the above. Add another example to the list: a dead-end bus line in Albuquerque, N.M.

Albuquerque's main artery is Central Avenue, nationally known as part of historic Route 66. In the busiest part of town, it's a six-lane thoroughfare bordered by the University of New Mexico, hippie shops and tattoo parlors, and popular restaurants and art galleries. But Central Avenue isn't as busy as it used to be, because it's also the site of the finished, but non-functional, Albuquerque Rapid Transit system.

ART, as the system is known, was originally supposed to be light rail, a perennial favorite of the public-transit set. In 2011 the city abandoned that bad idea only to begin studying another: a "bus rapid transit" system built around dedicated bus lanes. By 2014 officials had approved the project and asked the federal government for funding. ART's boosters projected as many as 15,000 daily riders would travel between its 19 stations. As Mayor Richard Berry said the following year, "We think it's going to be a game-changer in Albuquerque."

But now Mayor Berry is gone and the project is stalled. Albuquerque's new mayor, Tim Keller, calls ART "a bit of a lemon." That's putting it mildly.

From the moment construction began, ART upended the Central Avenue corridor. Because of dedicated bus lanes, much of the street has been permanently cut down to one

or two normal lanes in each direction. Many locals now avoid the area—and its congestion—entirely.

Larry Rainosek, who owns Frontier Restaurant, says sales are "a little bit lean" due to the disruption caused by ART. He says that Frontier's business initially fell by more than 20%. Things have since stabilized, at 10% lower than before, and the days of 5% annual growth appear to be gone. The restaurant has stopped hiring. Mr. Rainosek says the project was "a win for the construction industry, but that's about it."

An ART spokeswoman admitted to the Albuquerque Journal that the construction phase of the project may have cost local businesses as much as 40% of sales. One car-wash owner said monthly revenue dropped \$50,000, and a burger joint closed its doors, leaving about 30 workers without jobs.

ART advocates maintain that the transit system will ultimately benefit local businesses, but the completed project actually built new barriers between companies and customers.

Advocates force businesses along historic Route 66 to suffer while they indulge their transit fantasies.

The dedicated bus lanes eliminated left turns onto many side streets, creating navigation problems for people looking to patronize local businesses. The lanes also cause accidents. On the same day ART started service, a bus crashed into a car making an illegal U-turn.

Today, more than 16 months after Mayor Berry hopped on ART's first ride, the bus lanes are empty. In 2016 the city paid \$23 million for a fleet of 18 all-electric buses from the Chinese company Build Your Dreams. Three months after the October 2017 delivery deadline, only half the buses had found their way to Albuquerque, and they were not in peak condition. The system for charging the buses' batteries proved faulty, and city inspectors found problems with the air conditioning, door and braking systems. Most of the buses were deemed unsafe, and Mr. Keller announced in November that the city would return them and instead order 10 old-fashioned buses from an American manufacturer. Those buses won't arrive until at least 2020.

The boondoggle has cost New Mexico taxpayers. The ART price tag,

originally \$100 million, loomed 33%. Berry administration officials sold the project in promise of federal funding. They forced the city to loan \$1 million in general-fund dollars to keep things moving. The Albuquerque Journal reported in January that ART's ever-growing budget tribute to the city's \$20 million this year.

It's anyone's guess whether the Albuquerque Rapid Transit will be and running. From what we so far it's doubtful this public project will meet its goals—politicians in Albuquerque, where else, will learn the lessons from its failure.

Mr. Ford, a former chief writer to Vice President Mike is founder of West Exec Writ

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