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**Public Transportation Riders Power our Economy**

In Fort Wayne, and across the United States, public transportation riders are an integral part of the engine that powers the economy, according to a new demographic study from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). The study *Who Rides Public Transportation* reveals that 87% of trips on public transportation bring employees to their workplace or consumers to businesses. Almost 90% of transit passengers are in the most economically active years of their life – ages 20 to 64, the study shows.

“Public transportation drives our economy forward,” said Betsy Kachmar, Assistant General Manager. “Not only do we employ 120 people and contribute by purchasing local products to keep our system moving, we connect Fort Wayne’s employees to their workplace. Our community should not ignore the instrumental role that public transportation plays in moving our community to the next level.”

The National Facts:

Sixty-three percent of public transit riders use it at least five days a week; 13 percent every day. Commuting is the primary trip purpose for many users, however, many also use public transit for shopping, dining and other activities that grow the economy.

Other important public transit rider demographics highlighted in the study include:

- More than 51% of public transit riders hold a Bachelor’s degree or higher level of education.
- The top level of the income spectrum, \$100,000/year or above, of a household that uses public transit is very similar (21%) to the percent of all U.S. households (23%) in this top income level.
- The majority of public transit users are women (55%).
- Public transit users are multi-modal; 65% have a driver’s license.
- More than two-thirds of public transit users walk to their stop; thus classifying public transit as a healthy, “active transportation” option.
- Nationally, in urban areas with a population between 200,000 and 999,999, 48% of transit users are employed and 24% are students. This means 72% of transit riders are working or preparing for a career. In Fort Wayne, rider surveys conducted in 2011 indicated over half of Citilink riders were going to/from work or school. Other trips include shopping, recreation, medical, etc.

As we travel on the road to 1 Million residents in Northeast Indiana, investment in public transit infrastructure will be a key to maintaining a healthy economy, reducing the negative impacts of density (congestion, pollution, parking, land use issues, etc.) and getting people where the need to go where ever life takes them.

***Who Rides Public Transportation: A Profile of Public Transportation Passenger Demographics and Travel Characteristics*** is based on 695,748 respondent questionnaires. The surveys included were conducted during eight years from 2008-2015. The systems reporting provided more than 8.3 billion passenger trips annually. This amounts to 77% of the 10.8 billion public transit trips provided nationwide in 2015. To read the study in its entirety go to [www.apta.com/WhoRides](http://www.apta.com/WhoRides).

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