

31 Major Pros & Cons Of Public Transportation



"Public transportation is like a magnifying glass that shows you civilization up close."



Chris Gethard, Actor



The Pros & Cons of Public Transportation

Public Transport	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Efficient transportation method ▪ Less greenhouse gas emissions ▪ Less air pollution ▪ Less smog ▪ Cheaper compared to using your car ▪ You may be able to work while using public transport ▪ Possibility to avoid traffic jams ▪ Reduction of public health problems ▪ Opportunity to meet new people ▪ No maintenance required from your side ▪ Good alternative for people who can't drive ▪ Suitable alternative if you cannot afford a car ▪ Reduction of negative externalities from cars ▪ Perfect for tourists ▪ Good alternative for the older generation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some public transport systems are quite bad ▪ Long waiting times ▪ Unreliable ▪ Delays may imply problems at work ▪ Less flexibility regarding detours ▪ Transportation of heavy goods may be a problem ▪ Higher chance for infections with diseases ▪ Pretty crowded at rush hour ▪ Less convenient compared to cars ▪ Not suitable for remote areas ▪ May be not safe in some regions ▪ You may have navigation problems ▪ Expansion of public transport may hurt other industries ▪ Job losses ▪ You may get stuck late at night ▪ People may not want to use public transport

Public transportation (sometimes also referred to as mass transportation) is a term used to describe all transport systems that are meant for group travel instead of going alone by private transport.

Public transport has become increasingly important since our population is growing and we also have to slow down global warming.

Therefore, public transport will play an even bigger role in the future.

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Efficient transportation method

One advantage of public transportation is that it is a quite efficient transportation method, meaning that a high number of people can be carried around in each vehicle.

Compared to cars, it is much more efficient since less emissions are produced per passenger.



Public transportation is also superior from a monetary perspective since it is cheaper to transport many people in one vehicle than if everyone is using his or her car on their own.

Less greenhouse gas emissions

Public transport is also much eco-friendlier compared to cars when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions.



Since global warming will become a serious problem in the near future, we should try to save greenhouse gases as often as possible.



Thus, by using mass transportation, we could reduce greenhouse gas emissions and [slow down global warming](#) to a certain extent.

Less air pollution

In big cities, air pollution often is a serious problem.



Especially in the US and China, large numbers of cars and motorbikes are used to get from A to B.

However, the use of those vehicles that are mostly operated by fossil fuels implies significant air pollution.

This air pollution is not only quite unpleasant and lowers the overall quality of life of many people, it can also lead to serious health issues like asthma or other pulmonary diseases.

Thus, by using public transport instead of cars, the [air pollution problem can be mitigated](#) quite effectively.

Less smog

Especially during rush hour, dense smog often forms over big cities on a global scale.



While everyone is commuting to work and back home, enormous amounts of emissions are produced and some cities are literally covered with smog.

Therefore, in order to [reduce the smog problem](#), switching from the use of cars to public transport would be a valid option since the emission levels in public transport are often lower and sometimes even close to zero if the public transport system uses electric vehicles instead of vehicles that are operated by fossil fuels.

Cheaper compared to using your car

If you consider not only the costs for fuel, but also the costs for repairs, maintenance and so on, public transport will be much cheaper for every individual compared to owning a private car.

Thus, especially if you are on a budget and need every dollar, you might want to use public transport instead of owning a car since you can save plenty of money over time by doing so.

You may be able to work while using public transport

Another upside of public transport is that you can work while you are commuting to your workplace or to university.

For instance, if you are working in a demanding job and you have to work long hours, you may be able to work a little bit while commuting with public transport so that you may be able to leave the office sooner at night.



Thus, public transport may allow you to use your time in a more efficient manner compared to sitting in our car and having to pay attention to the traffic.



Possibility to avoid traffic jams



Depending on the region, using public transport may also be faster compared to using your car, especially during rush hour since there are often plenty of traffic jams in big cities.

Thus, if you live in one of those crowded cities, chances are that you might be able to get to work and back home faster by public transport instead of using your car, which may allow you to spend more time with your family or your friends.

Reduction of public health problems

The air pollution that is implied by the use of cars may have [significant adverse impacts on our health](#).



Pulmonary as well as cardiovascular diseases become more likely due to significant air pollution, which may significantly lower our overall life expectancy.

Moreover, going to work by car often also [implies serious stress levels](#) for many people since they are often stuck in traffic.

This may further exacerbate the health condition of those people since stress is known to be a huge factor for health problems.



Therefore, by refraining from going by car and using public transportation instead, you might be able to stay healthy and decrease your likelihood to suffer from serious health issues over time.

Opportunity to meet new people

If you use public transport vehicles like buses or trains, chances are that you will get in touch with many people over time.

You might be able to talk to them and maybe you will also make new friends, especially with those people you meet quite regularly and who have a similar schedule as you do.

Thus, you might also have an opportunity to socialize by using public transport instead of using your car.

No maintenance required from your side

Another benefit of using public transport instead of your car is that you are not responsible for the maintenance at all.

You can just use public transport whenever you need it without having to worry about repairs or other issues.



In contrast, if you have a car, you may have to spend plenty of time, money and effort related to maintenance.

Thus, by using public transport, you can avoid all those issues and may be able to use the money and time you saved for more pleasant activities.



Good alternative for people who can't drive



Some people are also simply not able to drive.



This can be due to the fact that they never got a driver's license.

It can also be due to some health conditions which prevent people from using their cars since their vision might be quite bad.

Thus, for this group of people, public transport may be a great way to get around.

Suitable alternative if you cannot afford a car

Especially early on in our lives, we might not be able to afford a car.

Apart from the purchase price and the fuel costs, there are also significant maintenance costs related to cars which should not be underestimated.

Therefore, if you don't want to spend large sums of money on your car, you might use public transport instead.

By doing so, you can save plenty of money, invest it and may be able to afford a car later on in your life.



Reduction of negative externalities from cars

The use of cars does not only imply private, but also significant social costs.

For example, if you use your car, you have to pay for fuel, maintenance and so on.

However, there are additional social costs like pollution that you impose on the general public.

By using your car, the health of pedestrians will also be negatively affected since they will inhale your emissions.



Thus, by using public transport instead of cars, we can also significantly lower the negative externalities that are imposed on the general public.

Perfect for tourists

Public transport is also perfect for people who are only in a specific region for a quite limited period of time.

For those people, it is often not worth it buying and licensing their own car.

Thus, especially for tourists, public transport is a great way to get around in a cheap manner.

Especially in big cities with good public transport, there is no need for tourists at all to get a private car since they will be able to reach every destination they want using public transport instead.

Good alternative for the older generation

Old people often have some problems with their vision and are also at greater risk for heart attacks or strokes.

Therefore, for this group of people, public transport may be a safer way to get around compared to using their cars.



Disadvantages of Public Transportation

1. **Some public transport systems are quite bad**
2. **Long waiting times**
3. **Unreliable** in many regions
4. **Delays may imply problems at work**
5. **Less flexibility regarding detours**
6. **Transportation of heavy goods may be a problem**
7. **Higher chance for infections with diseases**
8. **Pretty crowded at rush hour**
9. **Less convenient compared to cars**
10. **Not suitable for remote areas**
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12. **You may have navigation problems**
13. **Expansion of public transport may hurt other industries**
14. **Job losses**
15. **You may get stuck late at night**
16. **People may not want to use public transport**

Some public transport systems are quite bad

Even though we have seen in the previous analysis that public transport can have many important benefits, there are also some problems related to mass transport.

One major downside of public transport systems is that the quality of those transportation systems is quite bad in many regions all over the world.

Especially in the US, apart from a few big cities, the quality of the public transport system is often quite poor and it may take several hours to get to a destination which would have been reached in just 20 minutes by car.



Long waiting times



In some areas, you might also have to wait for quite long until the next bus or train will arrive.



Especially in rural regions, the frequency of public transport vehicles will often be rather low and sometimes, there will even only be a few buses a day.

Thus, if you don't know the schedule, you might have to wait over an hour until you can take the next bus that will finally bring you to your destination.



Unreliable in many regions

Public transport may also be quite unreliable. In some regions, buses or train may be late on a regular basis or might not show up at all.

Thus, if you live in one of these areas, you might not want to rely on public transport, especially if you have important appointments and you cannot afford to show up late.

Delays may imply problems at work

By using public transport, you might also come to work too late quite often.

This may cause serious problems and you might even get fired at one point in time.

Thus, you might rather rely on using your car for commuting in order to avoid unpleasant consequences related to showing up late at work, especially if you like your job and want to stay in this company for a

longer period of time.

Less flexibility regarding detours

If you drive back home from work with your car, it might come to your mind that you might have to buy some groceries for dinner.



If this is the case, it will be quite easy for you to make a small detour and to stop at a local grocery store.



However, if you use public transport instead, this small detour may lead to serious issues since you might have to wait for quite long hours for the next bus.



Thus, especially if you enjoy a high level of flexibility, using your car might be preferred over using public transport.

Transportation of heavy goods may be a problem

It may also be quite hard to carry heavy things around you in public transport.

For instance, imagine you bought beer cases at your local store.

This case of beer will often be quite heavy and without a car, it will be quite exhausting to carry it home.

Thus, in case you have heavy things to bring to your home, your car will definitely be the way to go and you would have a quite hard time using public transport for these kinds of tasks.

Higher chance for infections with diseases

Since public transport is often crowded and many people will go on a train or on a bus together, the chance for infections with diseases will be generally much higher compared to going by private cars.

Thus, if you are unlucky, you might catch the flu or other diseases on your way to work or back home if you use public transport systems.

Therefore, if you are scared in this regard, refraining from public transport and going by car might be the way to go for you instead.

You could also consider using an alternative to conventional cars.

This may include the use of electric cars, but also electric scooters or going by bike.

Pretty crowded at rush hour

In many big cities, the public transport systems are quite crowded, especially at rush hour.

Therefore, it may be quite inconvenient to be stuck with a high number of people on a crowded train every morning.

This may cause plenty of stress for our body and brain system and may also lead to serious health

conditions in the long run.

Less convenient compared to cars

In general, public transport is considered to be less convenient compared to the use of cars by most people.



This is due to the fact that if you use your car, you just have to leave your house and you are ready to go.



You may be able to turn on your air conditioning or your heating whenever you like.



You may also be able to turn on the radio and listen to your favorite music.

However, if you use public transport, you will not have (full) control over those options since there will be only one setting regarding temperature and other parameters and you will have to accept those settings, even though they might lower your level of comfort.

Not suitable for remote areas

Especially in rural and remote areas, public transport is often quite bad or even non-existent.

In those regions, you will definitely need a car in order to get around and to stay connected with the outside world.

Thus, depending on where you live, public transport may either be quite good or non-existent at all.

May be not safe in some regions

In cities that are known for high crime rates, it may also not be safe to use public transport since you might get robbed sooner or later.

This is especially true at nighttime.

If you want to get around at night, you might want to use your car or a cab instead in order to increase your level of safety, especially if you live in regions that are considered to be unsafe.

You may have navigation problems

While the navigation in some public transport system is quite good, it can be also rather bad in other cities.

Thus, especially if you are new in a city, you might have difficulties getting around and may get lost.

Therefore, make sure to figure out how the public transport system in your area works in order not to get lost and to avoid being late for important appointments.

Expansion of public transport may hurt other industries

Although public transport may greatly benefit the general public, especially if the public transport system is quite sophisticated, it may also cause serious problems for some industries.

For instance, if there are significant improvements in public transport, chances are that more people will use it and that the number of cars that are sold decreases.

In turn, car dealers and manufacturers will significantly suffer and many of them may even go out of business.



Job losses

Due to problems of some industries related to improved public transport, some workers in those industries may also lose their jobs.

Thus, good public transport may also cause an [increase in local unemployment rates](#), especially if the local industry is heavily dependent on car manufacturers.

You may get stuck late at night

Even though many public transport systems are quite good at daytime, they often stop to operate at night.

Thus, if you attend a party and want to get back to your home in the early morning, chances are that there will be no trains or buses running anymore and you might be stuck.

Therefore, before relying on public transport at nighttime, check out the schedule of your bus or train in order to avoid unpleasant consequences.

People may not want to use public transport

Some people are also quite used to their cars and simply do not want to switch to public transport at all.

Those groups of people may be quite hard to convince about the benefits of public transport since they used their car all their lives and do not want to make changes soon.

Thus, for those people, public transport may not be the way to go and there will always be a certain amount of people who simply do not want to refrain from using their cars.



Top 10 Public Transportation Pros & Cons – Summary List

Public Transport Pros	Public Transport Cons
Efficient transport method	Quality of public transport greatly varies across regions
Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions	May be unreliable
Lower level of air pollution	Long waiting times
Less smog	Less flexibility
Fewer traffic jams	Detours may be difficult
Opportunity to meet new people	Navigation problems
Good for tourists	Less convenient compared to cars
Good alternative for older people	Transport of heavy items is a problem
No maintenance required from your side	You may get stuck at nighttime
Cheaper compared to cars	Crowded at rush hour



Conclusion

Public transport is a great way to get around, especially in big cities where the public transport system is often quite good.

It will become even more important to use public transport instead of cars in the future in order to slow down global warming and also to protect our planet from all sorts of pollution.

Thus, even though public transport also has some problems, it will play a major role in the transportation of the future since we as humanity will simply have no choice other than to reduce the number of cars if we want to protect our planet in order to ensure a livable future for the next generations.

Sources

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