

SAFETY AND SECURITY: TRANSIT VERSUS THE AUTOMOBILE

A recent study from the Victoria Transport Policy Institute (VTPI), entitled "Safer Than You Think! Revising the Transit Safety Narrative," by Todd Litman, highlights the safety and security advantages of public transportation compared to travel by private automobile. The research, which is forthcoming in the *Journal of Public Transportation*, draws on data from the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics' (BTS) annual National Transportation Statistics report, the U.S. Federal Transit Administration's National Transit Database (NTD), and other sources to evaluate the internal and external risks associated with crashes, crime, and terrorism for both transit and private automobiles. The article also discusses the role of the national media and transit marketing in perpetuating the view that public transportation is dangerous. The article concludes with recommendations for (1) incorporating more comprehensive analyses of safety and security impacts in planning and investment decisions, (2) better communicating transit risks to the public, and (3) integrating the safety, security, and marketing programs of transit agencies. The following article is a summary of the study, its findings, and recommendations.

CRASH RISKS

The study evaluates and compares crash risks associated with various transit modes, passenger cars, and light and heavy trucks using data from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). Crash risk is defined as property damages, injuries, and deaths caused by vehicle crashes. In 2002, passengers on public transit (including intercity bus, heavy rail, transit bus, and commuter rail) had about one-tenth the fatality rate per mile traveled as car occupants (including passenger cars, light trucks, and heavy trucks).

Transit buses average approximately five fatalities per billion passenger-miles, compared to passenger cars, which average approximately nine fatalities per billion passenger-miles. The data also suggests that crash rates per passenger-mile tend to decrease for transit systems as the number of



passengers per transit vehicle-mile increase. Heavy trucks account for the greatest number of fatalities per billion passenger-miles, while intercity buses account for the fewest fatalities, followed by heavy rail, and then transit buses.

Data also indicate that as public transit travel increases in an area, crash risks tend to decline. The decline in traffic casualty rates can be attributed to the fact that residents of transit-oriented communities tend to own fewer vehicles and drive less, and these communities tend to have lower traffic speeds and a lower incidence of high-risk driving (i.e. teenagers, seniors, alcohol- or drug-impaired, etc.) due to increased travel options.

CRIME RISKS

The study also examines crime risks, defined as assaults and thefts against drivers, employees and passengers, vandalism, trespassing, and fare evasion against transit service providers. Trespassing and fare evasion incidents account for a large number of transit-related crime. Litman notes that their inclusion in measures of transit security tend to exaggerate the sense of transit risk.

Violent transit crimes in transit vehicles, and at stations, stops, and park-and-ride lots, as reported to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), decreased between 2000 and 2010, while ridership increased ten percent. Violent crimes include murder, rape, robbery, and assaults. Based on data from the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), transit crime accounted for 0.10 percent of all murders, 0.01 percent of all rapes, 0.56 percent of all robberies, and 0.38 percent of all assaults in 2010.

According to data from the BTS, there were 5,959 thefts and 1,184 vandalism incidents reported on transit properties in 2010, compared to 2,332,604 motor vehicle-related thefts, as reported by the FBI. Accounting for the number of passenger trips, miles, and hours indicates transit has significantly lower theft rates than those associated with private automobiles. Additionally, property crimes on private automobiles tend to be more costly than those associated with transit. Data from the FBI show costs associated with automobile theft average \$6,019 compared to \$987, the average cost of non-automobile thefts.

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NOTES FROM THE TOP

BY DONNA LAVIGNE



We are well into the fall of the year and have been very busy conducting trainings, site visits, and outreach meetings. We've hosted several training workshops and meetings, including six director's meetings and six STARS Trainings.

While we did not host the typical Annual Public Transportation Conference this year, we did hold a series of mini-day conferences in Baton Rouge during the first week of November. The mini-day conferences included training on our NEW online grant application -- Louisiana Transit Electronic Application Management (LA-TEAM) system and training on the new Safety and Security Plan requirements. We are very excited about the online grant application. Alliance Transportation Group conducted both trainings.

Since the last newsletter, we've had some new additions to our Public Transportation staff. Stephanie Barthelemy is the new Rural Assistant Program Manager, and Jessica Lenore is the new Elderly and Disabled Assistant Program Manager. Both started working in the Public Transportation Section this past August and have adapted well with the staff and the programs. We also welcomed Kasey Daigle as the accountant for the DOTD Public Transportation program. Please welcome Stephanie, Jessica, and Kasey when you see them.

Finally, we would like to encourage you to send topics or articles for future newsletter editions. If you would like to highlight your transit system or recognize one of your staff members, we will provide a forum to do so. We encourage you to share innovative ideas, techniques and uplifting stories about your transit system and/or special client. We want the transit newsletter to be an informative publication that addresses issues of interest to you and others.

That's it for this time....and thanks for all that you do to increase the mobility of those in need of transportation. We appreciate your continued support and wish you all a very Happy Holidays!



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ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

From all of us here at the DOTD Public Transportation Section, we wish you all a wonderful and safe Holiday Season and look forward to the New Year ahead!



NTI COURSES

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: www.ntionline.com

JAN 14 - 15	National Transit Database (Urban Reporting) Dallas, TX
JAN 27 - 28	Using the Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM Lite) Houston, TX
FEB 4 - 5	Introduction to Transit Asset Management Orlando, FL
FEB 18 - 19	Quality Assurance and Quality Control in Transit Orlando, FL
FEB 24 - 25	Comprehensive ADA Paratransit Eligibility Atlanta, GA

APTA EVENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: www.apta.com

FEB 7 - 10	Transit CEOs Seminar Phoenix, AZ For more information, visit: http://www.apta.com/mc/transitceos/Pages/default.aspx
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SWTA EVENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: www.swta.org

MARCH 1 - 4	SWTA & NMTA Joint Annual Conference & EXPO..... Santa Fe, NM Registration is now open. For more information, visit: https://www.regonline.com/Register/Checkin.aspx?EventID=1635437
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TRB EVENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: www.trb.org

JAN 11 - 15	Transportation Research Board 94th Annual Meeting Washington, DC Registration is now open. For more information, visit: https://show.jspargo.com/trb15/reg/default.asp
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SPOTLIGHT ON...

ALLEN PARISH PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND PAT JONES



Over 10 years ago in the March 2004 edition of the Transitions Newsletter, Allen Parish was one of the new Rural Transit providers spotlighted. We thought it was time to catch up with Ms. Pat Jones, the Executive Director of Allen Parish Public Transportation and the Allen Parish Council on Aging (COA) both located in Oakdale, Louisiana.

The Allen Parish Council on Aging began providing rural transportation services in July of 2003. In the 20 years prior, the agency provided only limited transportation services. Over the last 10 years the agency has grown from 3,000 miles per year to over 400,000 miles per year. Today, Allen Parish has eleven vehicles that provide services under three different programs – Elderly & Disabled Transportation, Rural Public Transportation, and Medicaid (non-emergency medical) Transportation.

Ms. Jones is a staple of the community and a walking advertisement for Allen Parish! She has lived in the parish for 70 years, 64 of those years married to the late Holman Jones. She has five children, eleven grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. They all live in the surrounding area.

She describes Allen Parish as unique and obviously desirable since it is claimed by both the Central Louisiana and Southwest Louisiana regions. She further notes that it is a rich and diverse parish with piney woods to the north and rice fields and cattle to the south. That diversity can prove challenging for meeting transportation needs. The mostly rural parish consists of one city (Oakdale), three towns (Oberlin, Kinder and Elizabeth), one village (Reeves) and one community (Grant).

In addition to her love and advocacy for Allen Parish, Ms. Jones is and has been a strong advocate for transportation in Louisiana. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Louisiana Public Transit Association (LPTA) and has served on the Statewide Transportation Coordination Committee. Nationally, she is an active member of the Community Transit Association of America (CTAA). She is quick to tell anyone and everyone that providing human services, without transportation, just isn't enough.

She is also an advocate for the Elderly & Disabled serving as Past President of both the Louisiana Aging Network Association (LANA) and Louisiana Councils on Aging Directors Association (LACOADA). The Allen Parish Council on Aging provides five hot meals a week, 250 days a year, both delivered (Meals on Wheels) and at the Senior Center in Oberlin. The center

in Oberlin also provides resources and recreation for the elderly of the parish. Plans are in the works to expand the building facilities at the center and the COA offices in Oakdale.

Some improvements that have made it easier to provide better transportation services in the parish include SITARS (Statewide Transit Tracking and Reporting System), new computers, a generator and a new garage facility. The new garage is covered, fenced with an electronic gate, and a storage building. So if you happen to be in Oakdale, Ms. Jones will happily show you around. She has shared her building plans with other agencies in the state and she already has ideas for further expansion!

Presently, the parish is conducting a "Need a Ride?" campaign, and in October they will start an "Everybody Rides!" campaign. The ongoing marketing efforts have facilitated the continuing growth in ridership. And more importantly, needed services are being accessed across the parish and around the state.

Allen Parish is blessed with a delightful, energetic, and, according to Ms. Jones, "almost reformed workaholic." When Ms. Jones isn't at the agency she enjoys traveling, playing cards and dominoes, sewing, cooking and reading "real" books.

DOTD ON THE GO...



One of the DOTD PT Section's mandates is to provide information and technical assistance to transit providers in Louisiana in order to assist them in meeting their requirements for FTA funding. These activities come in many different formats and venues. DOTD PT provides numerous training courses, workshops, and training materials, as well as a website and an annual conference. To keep all of our constituents up to date on DOTD PT's activities, DOTD On The Go features just a few selected items each quarter.

SITE VISITS

Part of the outreach and assistance that LaDOTD provides to the Rural Public Transportation (Section 5311) and Elderly and Disabled (Section 5310) providers are site visits from the program managers. LaDOTD conducted a total of 11 site visits for Rural, Elderly and Disabled, JARC and New Freedom during July, August and September. The site visits were conducted at Madison Parish VCOA, West Ouachita Senior Center, Caldwell Parish COA, Avoyelles Parish COA, RPTA, Gulf Coast Teaching, The Center, West Baton Rouge COA, The Greater King David, Franciscan PACE, and Foundation Industries.

OUTREACH

As most of you know, one of DOTD's primary goals is to provide some form of public transportation in all 64 parishes. It is a goal listed in the Louisiana Vision 2020 Plan. To further this goal, LaDOTD has been conducting educational visits to all of the parishes in Louisiana that do not currently have some form of public transportation service. In the summer and fall, LaDOTD conducted three outreach meetings for JARC and New Freedom. The outreach meetings were held at the Sabine Parish Council on Aging (COA), the Winn Parish COA, and the St. Helena Parish COA.

WORKSHOPS/ CONFERENCE

During the summer and fall, DOTD hosted six STTARS training opportunities, as well as six director's meetings which included additional STTARS training, and three mini- day conferences in November. STTARS training was held in the following locations/ for the following organizations:

- Minden
- Shreveport
- Natchitoches
- ARC of Greater New Orleans
- ARC of Acadiana
- West Baton Rouge COA

The six director's meetings, which included STTARS training were held in:

- Many, LA (2)
- New Orleans, LA (2)
- Baton Rouge, LA (2)

Three mini- day conferences were held in Baton Rouge the first week of November.

If your agency or someone within your agency deserves recognition for a job well done, or has already received recognition or an award, please let us know. Email or send a brief description, photos, and contact information to Donna.Lavigne@la.gov or to Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development/Public Transit Section, attn: Donna Lavigne, P.O. Box 94245, Baton Rouge, LA 70804.

Finally, the risk associated with violent crime to transit users is small when compared to the risk associated with traffic accidents. In 2010, there were 14,043 murders, compared to 32,788 traffic deaths. Furthermore, the article notes that most murders (about 70 percent) are the result of conflicts among acquaintances, rather than random acts of violence. Only 14 murders occurred on transit properties.

TERRORISM RISKS

While Litman notes that terrorism has become an increasingly important security concern, he stresses the relatively small risk associated with terrorism, when compared to traffic deaths. Additionally, Litman explains that total deaths can actually increase if terrorism fear causes travelers to shift from public transportation to private automobile. According to data following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, traffic fatalities increased by several hundred in the three months following the attacks. According to Litman, had these trends continued for more than a year, the additional traffic deaths would have exceeded the death toll from the terrorist attack.

RISK PERCEPTION AND COMMUNICATION

Litman highlights the role of disproportionate media coverage of transit accidents and assaults, and traditional transit agency safety and security messages that emphasize dangers in perpetuating the view that public transit is dangerous. Litman reviewed the safety and security messages of twenty representative transit agency websites. Of those twenty transit agencies, only one, the Utah Transit Authority in Salt Lake City, Utah, emphasized the safety advantages of travel by public transportation. On its "Transit Studies" page, the Utah Transit Authority states, "You are 25 times less likely to die in a traffic accident when you ride public transit versus travel in a personal vehicle." Additionally, their "Safety and Security" page offers safety tips.

Litman advocates for the development of a new safety narrative among transportation professional and organizations. He recommends that public transit agencies provide accurate and comprehensive information on the various ways that public transit can affect safety and security, and suggests transit agencies carefully assess their safety and security messages to ensure that they

are positive and convey a sense of partnership. Litman also recommends quantifying the impacts of transit on safety and security when evaluating planning and investment decisions, and incorporating safety and security benefits in transit agencies' overall marketing program.

Sources:

Litman, Todd. "Safer Than You Think! Revising the Transit Safety Narrative." Available: <http://www.vtpi.org/safer.pdf>

FROM CAPITOL HILL...

U.S. Transportation Secretary Foxx Announces \$100 Million in Grants to Connect More Americans with Jobs

On September 25, 2014, U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx announced \$100 million in competitive grants to 24 recipients in 19 states to significantly improve bus service and bus facilities in urban and rural communities where residents depend heavily on public transportation. The grants are provided through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Ladders of Opportunity Initiative, which supports the modernization and expansion of transit bus service across the nation, with the purpose of connecting disadvantaged and low-income populations—including veterans, seniors, and youths—with centers of education, employment, job training, health care, and other vital services.

FTA's Ladders of Opportunity Initiative proved to be one of the most over-subscribed discretionary grant programs in the agency's history. FTA received 446 project proposals from 282 applicants requesting a total of approximately \$1.4 billion—14 times the available funding. This highly competitive response reflects tremendous demand for modern buses and bus facilities in communities across the United States. Priority was given to projects that provide ready access to work for individuals lacking reliable transportation, especially in low-income and under-served neighborhoods; projects connecting to universities, hospitals or other places that can lead to improved quality of life; and projects based on effective partnerships with local governments, businesses, and non-profits.

A list of all funded projects is available at: http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/15926_16153.html.

Source: Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Available at: http://www.fta.dot.gov/newsroom/news_releases/12286_16155.html

