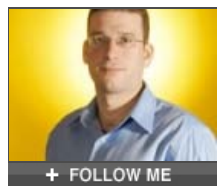




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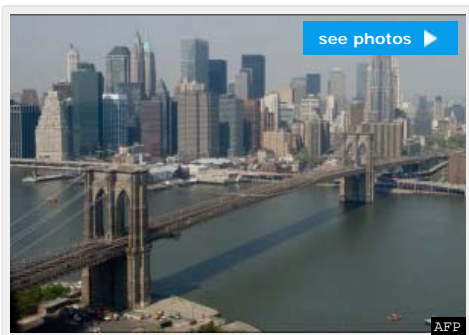





America's Top Public Transportation Cities

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Hoboken, N.J., is located on the west bank of the Hudson River and the New York skyline is visible throughout much of the town. To cross the river and get to work many Hoboken residents hop on a train or ferry. In fact, their use of public transportation is higher than any other city in the nation.



Click for full photo gallery: America's Top Public Transportation Cities

An estimated 56% of Hoboken's working men and women commute each day by public transportation. Many of them take the subway train run by The Port Authority Trans-Hudson, or PATH, which links Hoboken to Manhattan. Others take ferries run by N.Y. Waterway that run from two different Hoboken docks. Those Hoboken residents who work in other

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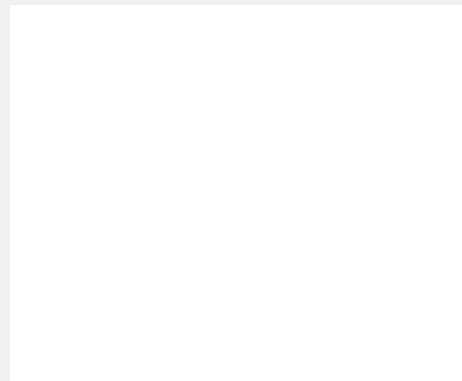
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parts of New Jersey have the ability to take several N.J. Transit trains or light rail.

“We really encourage people to use public transportation,” says Dawn Zimmer, Hoboken’s mayor. “We are proud people use public transportation and we are trying to make Hoboken a place where people have the option to live car free.”

Hoboken is so serious about reducing the role of the personal automobile that it partnered with Hertz to initiate the nation’s first car sharing program, which now boasts 42 vehicles and 1,600 members. There are three shuttle bus services running through town and city employees can’t keep up with the demand for bike racks at Hoboken’s PATH station.

In Pictures: America’s Top Public Transportation Cities

To determine America’s top public transportation cities, we looked at estimates of the percent of workers 16 years of age or older who traveled from their community to work by public transportation from 2005 to 2009, provided in the U.S. Census’ American Community Survey. We then excluded estimates that had a margin of error greater than 10%. In December 2010, the Census released for the first time ever data estimates based on surveys collected between 2005 and 2009 from all communities in America. These include cities, towns and villages, as well as Census-designated places (CDPs), a type of neighborhood that lacks a separate municipal government, but otherwise physically resembles one of these other places.

With an estimated 54.7% of its workers using public transportation, New York has the second-highest rate of public transportation use in the nation. The reason New York is not number one: less urban sections like the borough of Staten Island. The fact that the Census excludes taxi cabs in its definition of public transportation probably does not help.

Still, the reality is the New York region is by far more dependent on public transportation than any other section of the U.S. New York and its suburbs represent about one quarter of the nation’s public transportation sector and eight of the top ten public transportation cities in America. Five of those towns—Hoboken, Jersey City, West New York, Guttenberg and Union City—are clustered on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River. All these places are linked together with the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail and have access to N.Y. Waterway ferry docks. The PATH network also plays a significant role in the commutes of many people who live on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River.

“It is all about access to jobs, the success of Hoboken is really the success of an easy commute to lower Manhattan,” says Robert Paaswell, director of the federally supported University Transportation Research Center. “There were clever developers on the New Jersey side of the Hudson who built great looking condos that all look at Manhattan so you have the illusion that you are in New York and they are two thirds the price and you can park your car there.”

Still, experts like Paaswell have been ringing alarm bells over the

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ABOUT ME

I am an associate editor at Forbes based in New York, where I have worked since 2000. I graduated from Carleton University and Columbia University. [See my profile »](#)

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deteriorating state of the New York region's public transportation infrastructure. Just last month Jay Walder, the highly respected head of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority, resigned after a tumultuous two-year stint to run a transportation company in Hong Kong. "We are in a very bad place," says Paaswell. "Nobody is investing in transit in New York or around the country."

[In Pictures: America's Top Public Transportation Cities](#)

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Called-Out Comment

"We are in a very bad place," says Paaswell. "Nobody is investing in transit in New York or around the country."

In California, the political class has pie in the sky dreams for high speed rail, with no practical way to pay for it. The voters were duped into approving \$10 billion in General Obligation (state tax backed) bonds and were told that the bonds would not cause their taxes to go up. Some voters actually think that bonds are free money. \$10 billion may be enough to finance a section of the line between Bakersfield and Fresno. That's almost as bad as abridge to nowhere in Alaska.

In the meantime urban transportation systems will be lucky to keep what they have. The oldest Bay Area BART cars are approaching their 40 year useful life. BART has no idea how it will pay for new cars.

This isn't Germany. Americans won't pay \$8 a gallon for gas or a 19% VAT for goods and services.

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