



## Passenger Trains: Economic Engines for Growth

A Connected America is not only good for passengers but good for America's cities and towns, an economic engine in the communities it serves. The U.S. transportation status quo is broken—the nationwide cost of highway gridlock has grown to \$179 billion a year, or \$1,080 per commuter. And the cost isn't just in dollars; the average commuter spends 54 hours per year stuck in traffic.

Every Amtrak long-distance route creates a return on equity for the communities that have invested in it over the past few decades. And thanks to rigorous economic modeling *Rail Passengers* has developed over the past two years, we have been able to quantify that return in a way that hasn't been done previously.

### Southwest Chief

- A Rail Passengers study found that the Southwest Chief brings \$180 million in direct and indirect activity to Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico.
- Installing Positive Train Control along the three-state segment of the Chief will bring an additional \$135 million in temporary economic activity through construction, benefitting rural towns in KS, CO, and NM.
- If the plan to break up the Chief with a bus-bridge had gone through, 32 universities would have lost train service, 47 hospitals would have lost train service, and 130,000 auto trips would've been added onto roads four times more dangerous than the national average—for a stretch of rural and small communities with the lowest median income across the entire corridor.

### Virginia: A Decade of Growth

By investing in a 31 percent boost to Amtrak service, Virginia has produced a 101% increase in since 2003 and removed 600 million vehicle-travel miles from the commonwealth's highways. The results speak for themselves:

- \$1.4 billion in economic returns to Virginia
- Created or sustained 1,400+ jobs each year
- \$390 million in new tourist spending
- Profitable "above the rail" - \$17.58 per passenger in 2018

### Gulf Coast Rail

- A study done by Transportation for America and the Southern Rail commission found that restoring passenger rail between Mobile and New Orleans would produce \$216 million in annual economic benefits for Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama, despite costing the three states only about \$7 million each year.

### Empire Builder: Lifeline for the Mountain West

- Empire Builder is worth \$327 million every year to the economies of the states it serves, and by extension the entire U.S. economy. The government pays only \$57 million every year to run it.
- A Rail Passengers' economic analysis found that a second Amtrak train between Chicago and Minneapolis/St. Paul would generate \$47 million in annual benefits to Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois—a return on investment of better than seven-to-one.

- The impact is even greater for smaller communities. In 2018, the Empire Builder carried 2,400 passengers to Cut Bank, Montana (pop. 3,002), bringing \$378,725 in value to the community.

## Investing in American Manufacturing + Jobs

- An investment of \$1 billion in public transportation supports and creates 36,000 jobs (USDOT)
- Two out of three jobs created by public transportation investment replace lost blue-collar jobs with “green jobs” in the public transit sector (APTA)
- \$74.2 billion: Total contribution of the railway supply industry to U.S. GDP in 2017 (RSI)
- 650,000 jobs supported by the rail supply industry in 2017 (RSI)

## Economic Justice

The National Network provides economic opportunities to less affluent and less well-educated communities, many of which fall below the national median income. Taxpayers support Amtrak’s National Network in part because we want these towns to thrive and their citizens to have access to jobs and mobility. We all need the economy to grow and be strong.

## City of New Orleans

- Just 2 of the 19 stations served by the *City of New Orleans* route enjoy a Median Household Income above the national average, while the entire route serves working class cities and towns with relatively modest incomes.
- If you eliminated this train, service to 11 of the 19 stations would be eliminated.
- All 11 stations serve communities where the Median Household Income falls well below the national average of \$53,889.

We all have an interest in preventing towns in America’s heartland from decaying and drying up—because paying for the consequences of that is often much more expensive than just paying to keep them linked to the rest of the country.

**For More Information, Please Visit [railpassengers.org/blueprint](https://railpassengers.org/blueprint)**