



## Does the Public Transit Model Still Work?

Posted by [Prof. Goose](#) on April 7, 2006 - 9:33pm

Topic: [Demand/Consumption](#)

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Under the fold is a letter from Mojo Man, who wonders about the efficacy of the public transit model.

I live in Denver, and the workers at the bus company (RTD) are on strike right now, and I find something very interesting. There was a lot of worry pre strike that the traffic would be snarled, parking would be outrageous in our downtown area and there would be major problems and headaches. While it's true that there are people and businesses who are suffering, it seems as if the majority of people are getting on fine. In the following link (<http://forums.rockymountainnews.com/index.cfm?frmid=60&tpcid=4389>) you'll see peoples comments. There are more than I thought that say traffic is better!?

This brings me to my assertion that the public transit model is outdated and hurting rather than helping the problem. Think about this: I've read that public transit uses the lions share (47%?) of our oil in this country, and yet the aggregate ride-share (percentage of total trips on road) is probaby somewhere between 2-4% of all trips taken. I know the transit ride-share in Denver hovers around 1.5%! **[editor's note, by Prof. Goose]** anyone have numbers on this?

RTD is subsidized by a 1% (recently hiked from 0.6%) sales tax in the district and spend countless millions of dollars on programs for an absurd minority of the tax payers that live in the area. Running in Denver is light rail, bus, "call-n-Ride" (small vehicle on-demand service) and access-a-Ride (ADA mandated). They always seem to be trying to think of new ways to get people on the bus and yet make no difference what so ever. The real kicker to all of this is the following:

The drivers are on strike because there has been a 3 year wage freeze and there are many drivers who have worked upwards of 100 days with no break, not even a day off. RTD has to mandate over time because they can't hire enough drivers to serve the routes currently running. With a 1.5% rideshare in town, one has only to wonder what would happen to a district so incapable of handling tiny demand if the rideshare were to suddenly jump to say, 25%. The transit here not only does a poor job of providing a solution in the world we live in today, it would be a failure at providing any sort of releif in a post-peak oil world. I think this strike and the statements of people in Denver make that very clear.

Mojo Man



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