



TRANSIT NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, March 6, 2009

Contact: Mantill Williams, (202) 496-4869
Virginia Miller, (202) 496-4816

Public Transit Riders Save \$8,500 Annually *Economic Stimulus Law Also Provides Up To \$230 in Transit Benefit per Month*

WASHINGTON, DC – A public transportation rider can achieve an average annual savings of \$8,498 by taking public transit instead of driving, based on March 5, 2009 gas prices and the unreserved parking rate.

In addition to the annual transit savings, commuters who ride public transit to work are now eligible to receive an increase in the monthly transit benefit offered by their employer. The maximum transit benefit is now equal to the parking benefit and increases from \$120 to \$230 per month. The change is a part of the economic stimulus package passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama.

APTA's "Transit Savings Report" calculates this month's savings for public transit users at \$708 per month. This is based on the cost of parking and the March 5 gas price of \$1.933 as reported by AAA. Gas prices are up this month by .04 cents, but are still \$1.245 lower than last year.

Regarding parking costs, the national average for the monthly unreserved parking rate in a city's downtown business district is \$143, according to the *2008 Colliers International Parking Rate Study*. Over the course of a year, parking costs alone can amount to an average of \$1,720.

The top 20 cities with the highest transit ridership are ranked in order of their transportation savings based on the purchase of a monthly public transportation pass and factoring in today's local gas prices and the local monthly unreserved parking rate.*

Top Twenty Cities – Transit Savings Report

	City	Monthly Savings	Annual Savings
1	Boston	\$1,036	\$12,428
2	New York	\$1,032	\$12,390
3	San Francisco	\$960	\$11,516
4	Chicago	\$875	\$10,497
5	Philadelphia	\$861	\$10,333
6	Seattle	\$856	\$10,274
7	Honolulu	\$836	\$10,033
8	Washington DC	\$794	\$9,530
9	San Diego	\$772	\$9,268
10	Minneapolis	\$766	\$9,198
11	Cleveland	\$755	\$9,064
12	Portland	\$749	\$8,988

13	Denver	\$734	\$8,811
14	Baltimore	\$720	\$8,635
15	Los Angeles	\$701	\$8,416
16	Miami	\$685	\$8,222
17	Dallas	\$681	\$8,169
18	Las Vegas	\$675	\$8,105
19	Atlanta	\$669	\$8,033
20	Pittsburgh	\$630	\$7,556

*Based on gasoline prices as reported by AAA on 3/5/09.

Methodology

APTA calculates the average cost of taking public transit by determining the average monthly transit pass of local public transit agencies across the country. This information is based on the annual APTA fare collection survey and is weighted based on ridership (unlinked passenger trips). The assumption is that a person making a switch to public transportation would likely purchase an unlimited pass on the local transit agency, typically available on a monthly basis.

APTA then compares the average monthly transit fare to the average cost of driving. The cost of driving is calculated using the 2008 AAA average cost of driving formula. AAA cost of driving formula is based on variable costs and fixed costs. The variable costs include the cost of gas, maintenance and tires. The fixed costs include insurance, license registration, depreciation and finance charges. The comparison also uses the average mileage of a mid-size auto at 23.4 miles per gallon and the price for self-serve regular unleaded as recorded by AAA on March 5 at \$1.933 per gallon. The analysis also assumes that a person will drive an average of 15,000 miles per year. The savings assume a household gives up one car.

In determining the cost of parking, APTA uses the data from the *2008 Colliers International Parking Rate Study* for monthly unreserved parking rates for the United States.

To calculate your individual savings with or without car ownership, go to www.publictransportation.org.

###

APTA is a nonprofit international association of 1,500 member organizations including public transportation systems; planning, design, construction and finance firms; product and service providers; academic institutions; and state associations and departments of transportation. APTA members serve the public interest by providing safe, efficient and economical public transportation services and products. APTA members serve more than 90 percent of persons using public transportation in the United States and Canada.