

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATIONS TOP TEN MYTH BUSTERS

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MYTH BUSTER #1 - Public Transit provides only general public rides;

FALSE, public transit has ceased to exist for several decades as only a general public conveyance with the inception of human service programs placing their riders and financial burden on the seemingly broad shoulders of public transit. This effectively has made it a mobility program for all services, but funded by few.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MYTH BUSTER #2 - Fare is the cost of a ride;

FALSE, the fare is a fee imposed on the general public rider to use the service. Farebox only accounts for a small percentage of overall costs.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MYTH BUSTER #3 - Human Services should be afforded usual and customary fare or even discounts;

FALSE, human service programs are client specific programs with identified levels and/or percentages of federal funding in support of their mission; including transport of their clients. When put on a transit for less than cost (fare), the human service program fails to leverage federal dollars rightfully available to pay the cost of the ride. This methodology has left billions of dollars in federal subsidies unclaimed and placed squarely on state, local government, and transit authorities/systems in excess of their state and local match requirements.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MYTH BUSTER #4 – Always seek the financial advice of larger, more experienced transit agencies;

FALSE, While larger agencies can offer great advice in areas such as preventative maintenance, union issues, and technological advancements, they are steeped in past tradition of first seeking additional subsidies for troubled times, and rarely do they look to creative means such as coordination beyond their own services, or cost sharing with partnering agencies as an option. Many will seek to relieve financial duress through service cuts, fare increases, and even work force reduction in hopes of riding out the storm for better days ahead. This is not visionary and has become very costly and needs to change.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MYTH BUSTER #5 - Better days are ahead;

FALSE, Better days are not ahead, they will get worse, much worse. The world's population is increasing nearly a billion people per decade. Baby Boomers are on the verge of senior citizen status that will put a strain on current mobility needs like we've never experienced. The children of the baby boomers are significant in number as well, and will likely trump their own parents pending mobility needs, not to mention Generations X, Y and the Millennia's to follow after that. If better days are ahead we will not be around to see them. The storm is just starting and will get more intense; plan creatively for it, riding it out is not an option.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MYTH BUSTER #6 - Coordination is hard;

FALSE, Coordination isn't hard; leadership and collaboration is hard. Coordination is just a by-product of these two key components and can't be realized until leadership and collaboration is accomplished.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MYTH BUSTER #7 - Public Transportation is a community's mobility coordination program;

FALSE, Public Transportation is but one component of mobility coordination, but often treated and thought of as real coordination simply because other agencies are riding on it. This misinterpretation allows uncoordinated activities already fraught with wasteful spending to continue for lack of true education and awareness.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MYTH BUSTER #8 – Shared ride services is coordination;

FALSE, shared ride services are only one part of coordination that if planned incorrectly will inflate budgets, fail to leverage available funding, shift costs, and ultimately falter when fiscal concerns surface.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MYTH BUSTER #9 - Cost Sharing is participation by municipalities and businesses in transportation costs;

FALSE, participation by municipalities and businesses is donating to a cause either through a required match, perceived economic benefit, or necessary additional contribution. Cost sharing is a partnership of stakeholders having a common need for services that develop an agreed upon methodology for paying for said services and using existing resources and infrastructure in an efficient and effective manner that's accountable, transparent and doesn't shift the financial burden, but shares it equitably among all stakeholders.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MYTH BUSTER #10 - Current transportation financial concerns are due to the economy;

FALSE, Current concerns are self-inflicted from decades of manmade barriers, territorial concerns, shifting of financial burdens, and working in silos on how we move people around. This has resulted in a huge amount of wasteful spending, duplicative efforts, and excess capital purchases. If inefficiencies are corrected through true coordination and mobility management, it can free up an abundance of resources and reduce capital needs while still meeting the same demand ("do more with less"). Inefficiency is the problem; a bad economy simply brings it to the surface much faster.