



Rural Transportation

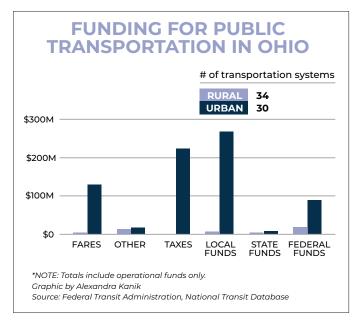
Rural Transportation: Addressing Barriers to Transportation Equity with Sustainable Solutions

SYSTEMIC INEQUALITIES IN RURAL TRANSPORTATION

A strong transportation system elevates communities through the economic development, social aggregation, and access to resources it provides. However, inequitable transportation systems can have the reverse effect of debilitating communities that do not have access to its services. This inequitable distribution of public transit is particularly salient across geographic areas: **only 11% of rural residents** report having access to public transportation near their home, **compared to 83%** of central cities in metropolitan statistical areas despite similar rates of reliance on public transit.1 Figure 1.1 illustrates the similarly inequitable distribution of funding for rural and urban systems.



Many rural areas are centered on land-based economies, where robust, rich landscapes are critical to the vitality of these communities. In Ohio alone, **nearly 50%** of land



allocation is concentrated on agriculture, despite only **36% percent** of people living in rural areas. Transportation planning, therefore, has important implications for environmental and natural resources protection, especially in a rural context. The development of equitable transportation must therefore consider **both** the socioeconomic wellbeing of rural residents and vitality of rural land in order to be truly equitable.

SOCIETAL BENEFITS OF EQUITABLY DISTRIBUTED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS



Access to Resources According to NRHA,

there are 263 healthcare specialists per 100,000 people in urban areas compared to only 30 in rural areas. Additionally, 80% of regions in the US with low educational attainment are rural communities. Both factors are directly related to lack of access to transportation.



Economic Development

Transportation

reduces production

costs, leading to

more competitive pricing and overall more economically competitive region.

Better networks can lead to reductions in travel time, lower vehicle operating costs, and increased property values.



Community Aggregation

Transit allows more

people to come closer together in higher density developments, sustaining clusters of industries and businesses by supporting their closer proximity to each other, which improves productivity and creates aggregations of activities.



Improved Access to Jobs

Increased
transportation systems
result in larger pool of
employees available
for the job market. This
may come from a new
transit or commuter
rail line that makes it
possible for employees
to reach previously
inaccessible jobs.



Improved Well-Being

Transportation is
a fundamentally
social determinant
to mental, physical,
and emotional wellbeing for those in rural
communities and is
also an important tool
in reducing social
isolation for groups
such as older adults
and people with
disabilities.