



# COMMUTER RAIL



**More Information:** [tti.tamu.edu/policy/how-to-fix-congestion](http://tti.tamu.edu/policy/how-to-fix-congestion)

## Description

Commuter rail provides transit to commuters traveling from the suburbs to central business districts. Commuter rail uses the same right-of-way as existing freight and passenger train tracks.

## Target Market

As population grows and traffic congestion worsens, the commuter rail system is becoming more valued in metropolitan areas. It provides cost-efficient, peak-period travel service for long-distance passengers. Commuter rail has a high potential to attract customers that drive from suburban homes to work in the central business district or other activity centers during weekdays.

## How Will This Help?

- **Increases regional mobility and accessibility** by providing a reliable, independent commuter option.
- **Costs less** than other comparable capacity additions.
- **Provides a comfortable alternative** to driving.
- **Reduces environmental impacts** from automobile commuters who switch to commuter rail.

## Implementation Issues

### **Park-and-Ride Lots**

Transit agencies and planners should consider parking needs and future expansion potential when planning stations.

### **Shared Right-of-Way**

Planners often need to negotiate the privilege of using tracks with busy freight rail operators and find adequate funding for both construction and operation.

### **Amtrak Supply**

The U.S. Government Accountability Office stated that Amtrak is experiencing chronic financial problems. There is a concern that if Amtrak were to abruptly stop, commuter rail operation would be significantly affected.

### **Development Opportunities**

Economic development potential along commuter rail corridors is lower than along heavy rail or light rail because commuter rail is separated from other urban uses except at stations.

## COST



## TIME



## IMPACT



## WHO



TRANSIT AGENCY/  
MPO

## HURDLES



RIGHT-OF-WAY

## SUCCESS STORIES

### **Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas**

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) and the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (The T) jointly provide the Trinity Railway Express (TRE) commuter rail service.



**15th most ridden commuter rail system** in the nation carrying **2.1 million passengers** in 2013.



### **Austin, Texas**

Capital MetroRail, operated by the Capital Metropolitan

Transportation Authority since 2010, provides commuter rail service in the greater Austin area.



**By 2012, system ridership reached 1 million, a 50 percent increase over the previous year.**

