

Human Transit

How Clearer Thinking about Public Transit
Can Enrich Our Communities and Our Lives

Jarrett Walker

Public transit is a powerful tool for addressing a huge range of urban problems, including traffic congestion and economic development as well as climate change. But while many people support transit in the abstract, it's often hard to channel that support into good transit investments. Part of the problem is that transit debates attract many kinds of experts, who often talk past each other. Ordinary people listen to a little of this and decide that transit is impossible to figure out.

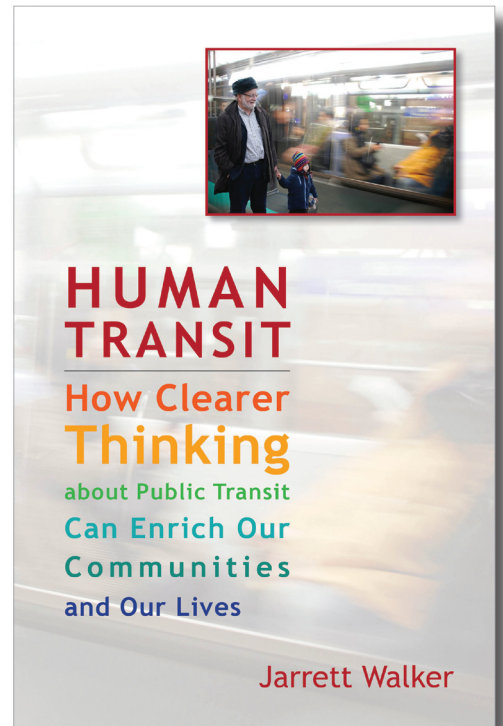


Jarrett Walker believes that transit can be simple, if we focus first on the underlying geometry that all transit technologies share. In *Human Transit*, Walker supplies the basic tools, the critical questions, and the means to make smarter decisions about designing and implementing transit services.

Human Transit explains the fundamental geometry of transit that shapes successful systems; the process for fitting technology to a particular community; and the local

choices that lead to transit-friendly development. Whether you are in the field or simply a concerned citizen, here is an accessible guide to achieving successful public transit that will enrich any community.

Jarrett Walker has been designing public transit systems for over 20 years. He is an independent consultant in North America and Principal Consultant with MRCagney in Australia. He writes the popular transit blog HumanTransit.org.



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From the Introduction

Suddenly, public transit is a critical issue.

For decades the private car has seemed the ideal tool for free and spontaneous travel, and in rural areas and many small towns, that will continue to be true. But all over the world, people are moving into cities, and great cities just don't have room for everyone's car. Meanwhile, the converging threats of climate change and the end of cheap oil are forcing a new assessment of how cities work. Public transit – the most efficient mode for moving large numbers of people long distances across cities – is an essential tool in that effort. Today, even Los Angeles and Houston, cities that are world-famous for their extreme dependence on cars, are scrambling to grow their transit systems as fast as they can manage.

The frustrations of urban transportation have fed a growing public interest in public transit in many countries. But when well-intentioned people look at the public transit around them, many conclude that it doesn't make sense for them to use it. There are many logical reasons not to use transit. It may not go where you need it, or at the time you need to go. Perhaps you can get there three times faster by driving, or at half the cost. You may know from experience that you can't trust your service to come on time. Your transit agency's vehicles and staff may fail to meet the most basic standards for civility, safety and comfort. Your transit network may be too confusing, requiring you to wade through too much detail to figure out if the service is useful to you.

Look for *Human Transit* in December 2011

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