

When a neighbor recently questioned the need for a bus route from Apache Junction through East Mesa to connect to other cities in the Valley, I couldn't help but wonder why such a service isn't already available to the 100,000 residents of Apache Junction. After all, public transportation is a fundamental part of a city's infrastructure, especially for those who lack personal vehicles or the ability to drive themselves to common destinations. Shouldn't these citizens have the option of a reliable and accessible mode of transport for their daily needs, such as medical appointments, grocery shopping, or dining out?

Only some households can afford a car, not to mention two vehicles, to get to and from work. It is common for both adults to work a job to afford housing and food. Often, household teens and students must work to support a family or attend classes or events in other areas of the Valley. Public transportation should be an option or a necessity for them to function.

The economics of using buses instead of personal or commercial vehicles are simple math. An all-day pass for a rider on the Valley Metro System of Buses and Light Rail is \$4.00. If you are a senior, it is \$2.00. It is even more cost-effective for the daily user to purchase a monthly ride pass. With the average price of a gallon of fuel for a vehicle from \$3.50 - \$4.00 per gallon, which doesn't include maintenance and finance of a car, it is a good value for any consumer to let someone else do the driving. Parking is free if you take the bus or light rail to an event like a baseball game or a concert. Parking your vehicle at an event lot can cost more than \$15. Even if you own an electric car, you can't avoid the cost of parking. Public transportation saves money and reduces the stress of driving and parking, making it a more attractive option for many.

Public transportation offers significant environmental benefits. Public transit plays a crucial role in preserving our environment by reducing single-vehicle emissions and decreasing traffic congestion. Full-sized single-deck buses can carry between 60 and 120 passengers, while double-deck buses accommodate even more. These buses are operated on urban services in many cities, offering a sustainable and efficient mode of transport. By choosing public transportation, we save money and time and contribute to a cleaner and greener environment, a responsibility we should all take pride in.