RHODE ISLAND VOICES
a project of the RI Life Index

Transportation

Most Rhode Islanders rely heavily on personal vehicles to get where they need to go and perceive few reliable alternatives for transportation. Transportation experiences vary by age and geography, with younger residents and those living in Core Cities* reporting greater use of public transit. Among respondents who do not primarily use public transportation, most identified being able to get somewhere more quickly by car as a major reason they do not regularly ride the bus.



92%
believe expanded access to public transportation would benefit everyone, even if they do not use it

17% of Core City residents primarily use public transportation, compared with **2% in Non-Core Areas**

How Rhode Islanders Get Around

66% PRIMARILY DRIVE ALONE IN A PERSONAL VEHICLE

22% RIDE WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS OR COWORKERS

7% PRIMARILY USE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Walking/Rolling (3%) Rideshare/taxi (1%) Bicycling (1%) Other (<1%)

What Matters Most When Choosing Transportation

78% BEING ABLE TO GET WHERE THEY NEED TO GO

69% SPEED AND RELIABILITY

49% COST

"Routes are inefficient; it would take 1 hour with a transfer to get to work vs a 15-minute drive."

Responding to "Are there other reasons that you do not ride the bus regularly in Rhode Island?"

Cost Pressure and Reliable Alternatives

87% CURRENT MODE IS ONLY RELIABLE FORM OF TRANSPORTATION

32% COULD NOT AFFORD INCREASED COST FOR TRANSPORTATION

24% TRANSPORTATION COST IS SIGNIFICANT OR BURDENSOME

"Buses are not comfortable, are unreliable, and take a significantly longer time than driving. Plus I can't stop en route to do errands."

Responding to "Are there other reasons that you do not ride the bus regularly in Rhode Island?"

Why Residents Say They Do Not Ride the Bus

82% FEEL CAR TRAVEL IS FASTER

41% BUS ROUTES DON'T MATCH DESTINATION

39% DESTINATIONS TOO FAR FROM STOPS

32% NO SERVICE WHEN THEY NEED IT

30% BUS STOP LOCATIONS ARE INCONVENIENT

"I'd like to see them make an effort to explain and show others how the system works as well as generally improving it. I've lived here all my life and I don't know much about the public transportation system."

Responding to "If you could wave a magic wand, what would you like to see our government do to change public transportation that would make you want to use it more?"

What Kind Of Transit Improvements People Want

64% NEW RIPTA TRANSIT LINE

60% SMALL VANS

60% ALL DAY AND INTO NIGHT SERVICE

48% LIGHT-RAIL OR STREETCARS

***CORE CITIES:**
Core Cities are Rhode Island communities with the highest proportions of children living below the federal poverty level. At the time of this survey (May-July 2026), Core Cities included Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, Newport, and Woonsocket.