

TRANSPORTATION

Indianapolis named among worst cities for public transit. What IndyGo said

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New York and Jersey City reportedly have the most widely used public transportation in the country. In North Carolina, Raleigh is among the safest.

Indianapolis, according to a [recent report](#) by Consumer Affairs, is among the worst U.S. cities for both. It scored poorly for accessibility and operational safety, an analysis found, which ranked the best and worst places for public transportation.

Out of 50 major metro areas, Indianapolis ranked 47.

Consumer Affairs created its report with information from the Federal Transit Administration's [National Transit Database](#).

[IndyGo](#), the largest public transit provider in Indiana, said the data used by Consumer Affairs doesn't paint an accurate picture of what's happening currently in Marion County.

"While we are disappointed to see Indianapolis ranked so low in this report, it's important to note that it does not reflect the IndyGo of today," said Lisa Soard, director of communication for IndyGo.

Researchers examined the most recent federal data collected from 2024 to rank the 50 largest U.S. urban areas in three weighted categories for public transportation: usefulness, affordability, and safety.

"Because the analysis relies on 2024 data, it does not account for the substantial improvements we've made in recent years to expand service, enhance accessibility and strengthen operational safety," Soard said in a message to IndyStar. "We remain committed to delivering safe, reliable and accessible transportation, protecting our riders and operators, and building a strong, sustainable transit system for the future."

What U.S. cities ranked the best in public transportation?

The San Francisco-Oakland area in California had the best public transit in the U.S., according to Consumer Affairs. It had the second-highest ridership per resident in the country with the average person boarding its transit roughly 83 times a year.

The best five cities for public transportation, writes Consumer Affairs, are:

1. San Francisco-Oakland, CA.
 2. New York-Jersey City, NY-NJ
 3. Washington-Arlington, DC-VA-MD
 4. Seattle-Tacoma, WA
 5. Salt Lake City, UT
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Why did Indy rank among the worst cities for public transportation?

Ella Gomes with Consumer Affairs explained Indianapolis' low ranking came down to low scores in both usefulness and operational safety. Researchers, Gomes said, determined Indy had the third-least useful public transit system in the U.S.

"The average Indianapolis resident boarded public transit around 4 times in all of 2024, which is the third-lowest ridership rate in the 50 largest urban areas," Gomes said in a message to IndyStar.

Story continues after photo gallery.

Researchers determined Indianapolis metro-area residents traveled around 22 miles on public transit in 2024, the 3rd-shortest distance in Consumer Affairs' report.

Compare that to Seattle-Tacoma, Washington – ranked fourth overall – where the average resident travels 275 miles on public transit in a year.

Indianapolis is also the second-worst city for operational safety, Gomes said.

In 2024, there were around 6.62 collisions, fires, or derailments for every million vehicle miles traveled in service, according to the analysis.

Gomes said around five people were reportedly killed or injured per every million vehicle miles traveled in 2024 in major safety and security events.

Is there a bright side?

Yes, on the bright side, Gomes said, Indianapolis ranks as the 13th-best state for transit affordability.

All of Indianapolis transit stops included in the Consumer Affairs report were ADA-compliant.

"Overall, Indianapolis' poor ranking mainly stems from low transit use and struggles in operational safety," Gomes said.

IndyGo contended that recent strides to Indianapolis' public transit system might improve the city's score in a future report.

"We have expanded service by more than 300,000 revenue miles, invested \$10.5 million in bus stop improvements and safety remains our top priority through ongoing operator training, preventive maintenance and a 24/7 maintenance operation," Soard said.

Indianapolis ranked among worst in public transportation. Who else scored badly?

Other nearby cities didn't fare so well either in Consumer Reports' analysis. Both Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio, ranked among the worst places for public transportation. So too did Louisville/Jefferson County in Kentucky and Indiana.

In order of worst to slightly less that worst, the 10 lowest-ranking cities are:

1. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
2. Jacksonville, Florida
3. Buffalo, New York
4. **Indianapolis, Indiana**
5. Columbus, Ohio
6. Memphis, Tennessee, Mississippi and Arkansas
7. Virginia Beach-Norfolk, Virginia
8. Orlando, Florida
9. Cleveland, Ohio
10. Louisville/Jefferson County, Kentucky and Indiana

More information with a [full list of rankings](#) can be found online at Consumer Affairs' website.

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