

# Urban public transit, January 2021

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Wednesday, March 31, 2021

## Ridership continues to slide

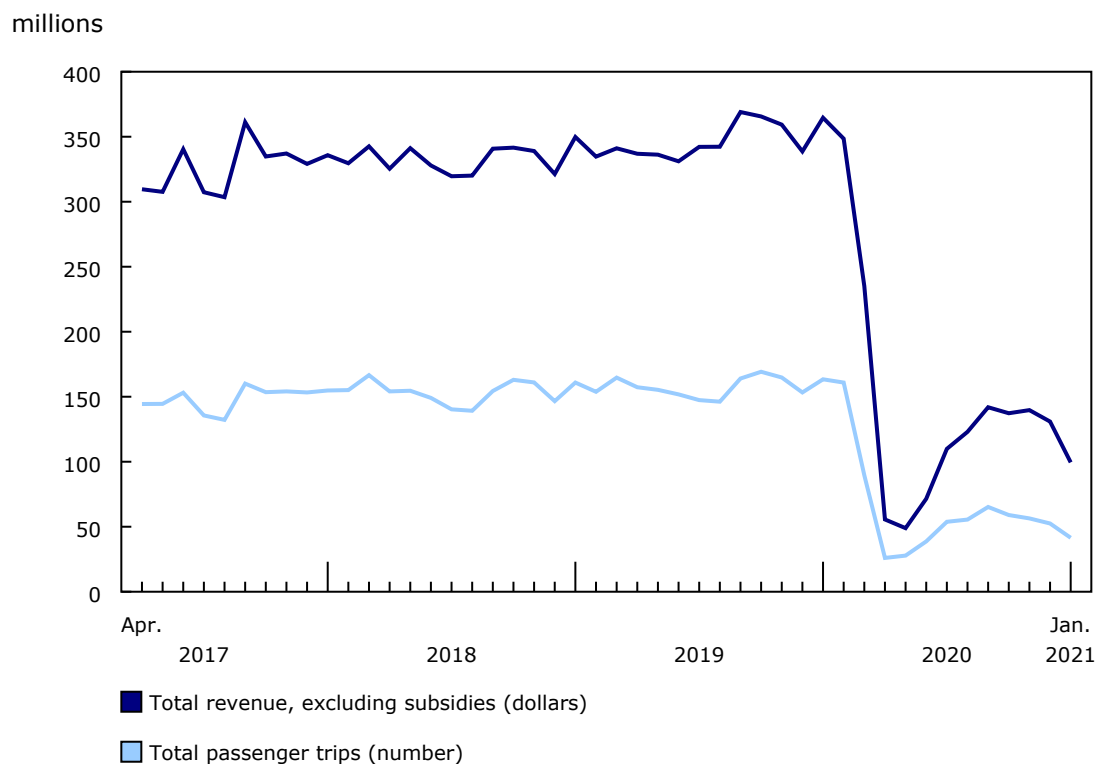
In January, a steep decline in transit ridership across the country reflected lockdown measures associated with a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Canada's public transit systems carried about 41.5 million riders in January, down 74.6% (or 119.4 million fewer rides) from January 2020. This was the fewest passengers since June 2020. This drop came after six consecutive months of year-over-year declines of 60% or more, pushing down the number of passengers carried in January close to that observed during the first wave of COVID-19 last spring.

On a monthly basis, transit ridership dropped by nearly 11.0 million rides nationally—a 21.0% decrease from December. This monthly decline stemmed largely from fewer transit commuters in the urban areas of Quebec and Ontario, where strict public health measures, including stay-at-home orders, lockdown restrictions and business shutdowns, were in effect in response to an upsurge of the virus. Together, these two provinces accounted for about 8.0 million fewer rides, or almost three-quarters (73.6%) of the decline in January.

### Chart 1

#### Urban public transit operating revenue and passenger trips, monthly, 2017 to 2021



Source(s): Table 23-10-0251-01.



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## Financial situation remains fragile

With ridership remaining well below pre-pandemic levels, public transit agencies continued to experience considerable pressure on their finances. Total operating revenues (excluding subsidies) were down 72.7% (-\$265.1 million) from the same month in the previous year to \$99.5 million in January—the lowest level in seven months.

### Note to readers

*Data for the most recent quarter are subject to revision. The data in this release are not seasonally adjusted.*

*This survey collects data on operating revenue (excluding subsidies) and the number of passenger trips from a panel of urban transit companies that represents at least 75% of revenues in each province and territory. Users should note that the panel is adjusted annually to maintain the 75% coverage and could differ slightly from what it was in the same month a year earlier.*

*Caution should be used when comparing values prior to January 2017 with more recent values, as the number of sampled companies changed significantly. Data prior to January 2017 can be found in table 23-10-0078-01.*

*The [Transportation Data and Information Hub](#), a web portal developed jointly by Statistics Canada and Transport Canada, provides Canadians with online access to comprehensive statistics and measures on the country's transportation sector.*

**Available tables:** table [23-10-0251-01](#).

**Definitions, data sources and methods:** survey number [2745](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).