

Passenger bus and urban transit, 2021

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Highlights

Total revenues for the more than 1,500 passenger bus and urban transit companies in Canada were \$23.7 billion in 2021, up 12.1% from 2020 and roughly on par with 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the increase from 2020, lingering impacts from the pandemic lockdown measures continued to be felt.

Subsidies sustain urban transit

With revenues of nearly \$20.1 billion in 2021, urban transit agencies—of which there were 104—accounted for most of these revenues (85%). Despite fewer passengers due to pandemic restrictions, revenues remained at historic levels in 2021 largely due to subsidies.

In 2021, the total number of transit passengers fell 13.2% from 2020. However, according to monthly [Urban public transit](#) counts, almost half (48.7%) of the 2020 total ridership was from the first three months, prior to any pandemic restrictions.

Overall, transit was on a steady path to recovery in 2021, with ridership as a percentage of the pre-pandemic 2019 level increasing steadily from 28.8% in January to 53.8% in December. For 2021 as a whole, ridership was more than one-third (37.2%) of that reported in 2019.

As public transit was deemed an essential service throughout the pandemic, employment in the industry remained stable in 2021 compared with 2020, while the total revenue-kilometres of service provided was marginally lower over the same period.

Passenger bus industries mixed

Revenues earned from the roughly one dozen interurban and rural bus companies (or intercity) edged down by 2.5% in 2021 to \$166.7 million, just over half (50.1%) of the average annual revenue earned by intercity carriers in the three years before the pandemic (2017 to 2019).

The intercity bus industry was hit hard by the travel restrictions and public health measures to combat COVID-19. Due to sustained declines in ridership in the Ontario and Quebec markets, the largest carrier—Greyhound Canada—discontinued all operations on its remaining routes in Canada on May 13, 2021.

Likewise, over 110 charter and sightseeing bus companies were impacted in 2021 by the pandemic; they reported a 16.3% decline in total revenue from 2020, following a 57.7% decrease from 2019 to 2020.

In contrast, total revenues reported from the 389 school and employee bus operators were up 11.2% from 2020 to \$2.7 billion in 2021, while the 944 other transit and ground passenger transportation companies, such as airport shuttles, reported an increase in revenues of 15.8% over the same period.



Table 1
Total revenue, passenger bus and urban transit, 2017 to 2021

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	thousands of dollars				
Total bus industries and bus activities in non-bus industries	20,637,919	22,226,739	23,094,893	21,109,687	23,653,738
Urban transit systems	16,711,156	18,173,439	19,024,813	17,804,975	20,060,651
Interurban and rural bus transportation	405,379	317,932	274,846	171,056	166,741
School and employee bus transportation	2,417,571	2,470,703	2,546,200	2,412,975	2,684,073
Charter and sightseeing bus industries	635,725	675,062	681,111	287,904	240,979
Other transit and ground passenger transportation	468,089	589,603	567,922	432,778	501,293

Source(s): Table [23-10-0081-01](#).

Note to readers

The Annual Passenger Bus and Urban Transit Survey collects financial and operating information from companies operating in Canada.

The survey covers the following North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) 2017 industries: urban transit systems (NAICS 485110); interurban and rural bus transportation (485210); school and employee bus transportation (485410); charter bus industry (485510); other transit and ground passenger transportation (485990); and scenic and sightseeing transportation, land (487110).

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: [23-10-0081-01](#) to [23-10-0084-01](#) , [23-10-0086-01](#), [23-10-0305-01](#) and [23-10-0306-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [2798](#).

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; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).