

Cars Suck

By Alex Taft

Cars can be tied back to so many modern problems. They're a major cause of global climate change, slow the rate of transportation, lead to thousands of deaths per year, and are far more expensive than alternatives to transportation. Furthermore, cars are completely replaceable by public transport, which combats all of the problems created by cars. By the end of this argument, you will agree with me on one simple fact: cars suck.



The first problem with cars is that they're a massive emitter of CO₂, the leading agent of global climate change. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that on average, a typical passenger vehicle emits 4.6 metric tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere each year. This leads to around 3 BILLION metric tons of CO₂ being emitted into the atmosphere by cars alone each year (Carbon Dioxide Emissions). 3 billion metric tons is so much carbon dioxide: carbon dioxide that is contributing to rising global sea levels, the spread of tropical diseases such as malaria, global droughts, dying crop yields, and more. And that number isn't even factoring in the fact that CO₂ is produced in the production of cars themselves, quite literally adding more fuel to climate change. One may argue that the problem of cars being mass polluters can be combated through the development and integration of electric cars, but this is a common misconception. You see, the production of electric cars actually produces even more emissions than the production of a standard car. Zeke Hausfather, a climate scientist and director of climate and energy at the Breakthrough Institute, an environmental research think tank, states that producing a 75-kilowatt-hour battery for a

Tesla Model 3 produces “emissions equivalent to driving a gas-powered sedan for 1.4 years, at a yearly average distance of 12,000 miles.” Even environmentally friendly cars still produce loads of greenhouse gas emissions, making cars an inevitable, significant agent of climate change. A better alternative to using cars would therefore be expanding public transportation programs, as the ability of public transport to transport many people in one vehicle would massively reduce emissions due to fewer vehicles being on the road. The Federal Transit Administration reports that heavy-rail transit such as subways and metro buses produce “76% less in greenhouse gas emissions per passenger mile than an average single-occupancy vehicle.” What this means is that on average, for every single person being transported by mass transit, 76% less greenhouse gas emissions are produced than the amount produced by people who drive cars. Cars will produce large amounts of greenhouse gases no matter what, but mass transit will always come through in reducing vehicle emissions.

The rate of transportation could be so much more efficient if it weren't for cars. By having so many people on the road, condensed into vehicles that tend to carry only 5, maybe 7 people at a time if we're talking vans, large traffic jams are created regularly. Take China's mother of all traffic jams for example, where thousands of cars were stuck in a 62-mile-long traffic jam that lasted 12 entire days (World's Worst Traffic). This is of course the most extreme example of slow transportation created by cars out there, but even just looking at local Bridgetown commuting issues, it's clear that cars drastically slow rates of transportation. Remember that awesome period of time when a normally 10-minute drive to Oak Hills would take up to 30 minutes just because the hairpins were closed? It was like our own little mini Chinese traffic jam! And that traffic jam would've

been virtually nonexistent if we just used mass transportation to get to school. Instead of having over 200 cars flood the streets to get to school, we could just have 20-25 buses take every student to school. There's definitely a lot more room on the streets when you don't have hundreds of cars waiting for green lights.

Big moving metal boxes of death; that's what cars are. In 2017, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that "there were an estimated 6,452,000 police-reported traffic crashes, in which 37,133 people were killed and an estimated 2,746,000 people were injured." In contrast to this, only 25,000 people were injured and only 276 people killed in U.S. metro bus crashes in 2017; furthermore, most of the injuries and deaths related to metro bus crashes were people in cars hit by buses being killed or injured, not the people within the buses themselves sustaining injury (Bus Accident Statistics). If cars are just phased out and metro bus programs are extended, injuries and deaths related to vehicle crashes will decrease inordinately. There's absolutely no point in using cars as a primary means of transportation when a much safer alternative that does the job just as well is out there. Yet another reason why cars are the worst.

Cars are so much more expensive than using public transport. Don't believe me? Let's do some quick and easy math to see how much more expensive having a car is than using public transportation. Let's say that you buy a \$12,000 car; to be generous with the estimates for the total cost, we'll say that you're able to pay the entire cost upfront, so you don't even have to worry about paying interest on a car loan. So far you have spent \$12,000 on your car, but don't worry, having a car gets more expensive. Car insurance specialist Kayda Norman states that, "The national average cost of car

insurance is \$1,630 per year.” Considering that the average lifespan of a car in the U.S. is 12 years, according to car repair organization “Cascade Collision Repair”, that would mean you’d end up paying around \$19,560 on car insurance premiums by the time your car’s lifespan ends. This car has already cost you \$31,560 over a period of 12 years, but wait, there’s more! You know that thing that everyone complains about? That’s right, it’s time to talk gas! Let’s continue our streak of generosity to cars, and say that gas prices remain at a consistently decent price of \$2 per gallon, your car only ever needs regular-quality fuel, and that your car needs gas every 2 weeks. Since an average car contains 12 gallons of gas (How Many Gallons), and your gas wouldn’t be completely empty (at least I’d hope) by the time you’re refilling it, to find roughly how much you’d spend on gas per year with your car we’ll multiply 2 by 10 by 26; 26 being the number of times you’d have to refill your gas tank due to there being 52 weeks in a year and you refilling your gas every 2 weeks in the year. That adds up to \$520 being spent on gas for your car per year even under pretty ideal circumstances, and \$6,240 on gas over our controlled 12-year period. Technically there’s more money that goes into cars beyond that, since your car may need repairs over those 12 years, but I’m feeling EXTRA generous, so we’ll say that your car is perfect and you never get into any sort of accident over 12 years. Adding all of these big scary numbers together, over a period of 12 years in a perfect world where you don’t have to pay interest, average gas prices aren’t \$3.897 per gallon in Ohio (Ohio Average Gas), and you don’t need to ever pay for any repairs on your car, the total cost of your car adds up to a nice round \$37,800. That’s a lot of money. Now let’s see how much math it takes to find out how much you’d pay using public transportation every day for 12 years. If you commute an average of 3

times per day and always just buy tickets, you'll be spending \$6 per day, as metro tickets in Cincinnati are \$2 flat. Multiplying 365 by 12 to get 4,380 days, then multiplying that by 6, you get that using the metro for transportation costs you \$26,280 over a 12-year period, over \$10,000 less than using a car. Furthermore, that's assuming that you're a dummy and don't just get the monthly metro passes that give you unlimited rides for \$80 per month, which would add up to a cost of only \$11,520 over a 12-year period. That's less than the upfront cost of your car! It is abhorrently obvious that public transport is far less expensive than owning a car albeit performing the same functions as a car, once again proving that cars suck and are completely inferior to public transport.

Such a great number of completely avoidable problems arise from the word "car". Climate change, unnecessarily high levels of traffic, fiery car crashes, and thousands of dollars wasted. These horrendous vehicles, completely replaceable by greater implementation of public transportation, are such a stain on mankind, yet no one ever seems to notice the stain's mark. The first step to wiping the stain clean is acknowledging one simple fact: cars suck.