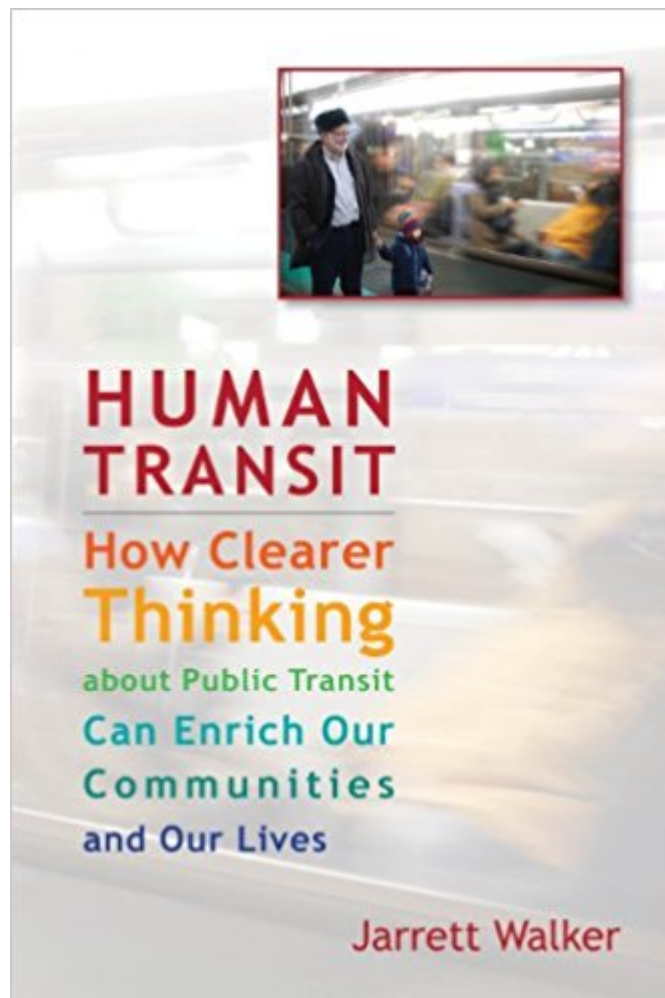




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# Human Transit: How Clearer Thinking About Public Transit Can Enrich Our Communities And Our Lives



## Synopsis

Public transit is a powerful tool for addressing a huge range of urban problems, including traffic congestion and economic development as well as climate change. But while many people support transit in the abstract, it's often hard to channel that support into good transit investments. Part of the problem is that transit debates attract many kinds of experts, who often talk past each other. Ordinary people listen to a little of this and decide that transit is impossible to figure out. Jarrett Walker believes that transit can be simple, if we focus first on the underlying geometry that all transit technologies share. In *Human Transit*, Walker supplies the basic tools, the critical questions, and the means to make smarter decisions about designing and implementing transit services. *Human Transit* explains the fundamental geometry of transit that shapes successful systems; the process for fitting technology to a particular community; and the local choices that lead to transit-friendly development. Whether you are in the field or simply a concerned citizen, here is an accessible guide to achieving successful public transit that will enrich any community.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I heard this author speak at a panel discussion about urban transportation, and I knew immediately that I wanted more of his clear thoughts. I am not a transportation planner nor much of a user of transit systems. Yet I found this book fascinating all the way through. Walker writes clearly and divides his topics into chapters, each focused on a specific issue, in a way that the whole picture unfolds easily and naturally. Any politician or urban planner could benefit from Walker's insights. He does not prescribe solutions, but he describes the crucial choices that are always made, either by design or default. I hope that transit leaders in my home town of Seattle have this book handy when they are thinking about the future of our city.

Firstly, this is a clear and well written book. It is not "technical" or jargon ridden, it uses clear and direct terms. It sets out a set of fundamental choices in a very well-defined and logical manner. It considers all forms of human transit and how these all interconnect. It takes a forward and workable view of the future for many urban areas. It does not take any sides or promote one form of transit system, which is quite liberating. It is not anti-car but does point out the many advantages of the more mixed transit mode era in which we live. For each of the choices offered it explains them with good strong and distinct examples from many parts of the world, so it is grounded in the current reality. It makes one dogmatic proposals but expects that the reality will end up being a bit messier than the pure intent. It acknowledges that in a democratic society, politics is a very strong force and that planners need to bring along public opinion or at least their representatives to any changes that they propose to improve the current situation where you live. Well recommended for anybody interesting in transit and its ability to transform the lives of citizens and the urban landscape that we live for the better.

Highly recommended for any planner, engineer, politician, enthusiast, transit rider, or concerned citizen. It is easy and enjoyable to read. Jarrett clearly knows what he's talking about. I learned a lot from this book and encourage others to do the same.

Jarrett presents the issues faced by anyone who cares about transit (and I include laymen, citizen activists, planners and politicians) in clear - and occasionally stark - terms that anyone can understand. He avoids jargon wherever he can: and when he can't, he defines the terms he must use well. I particularly appreciated his simple diagrams which he skillfully combines with real world examples. Finally, he (at least in this book) isn't partisan. There are tough decisions faced in considering transit, many of which are between two (or more) contradictory goals. He explains them

well, but doesn't try to force you towards his preferred answer. Indeed, he explicitly recognizes that these are fundamentally political decisions and, as such, lays out the planner's duty to both inform the politicians on the need for (and consequences of) fundamental decisions and to design a system that follows once the political decisions are made.

I love this book because it challenged everything I thought I knew about transit. Step by step Walker presents the decision points, and the range of decisions, and makes it clear what the consequences of each decision are.

As someone who primarily uses a car and occasionally uses transit, I felt that this book opened my eyes to the possibilities of transit. Some big tools that I'm already putting to good use: (1) make sure new development is "on the way" of a transit system; and, (2) frequency is freedom. This book is a must for those involved in development (or redevelopment) of their town. Smart decisions now can mean big savings and a better lifestyle in the future.

I'm convinced that few other people in the world know as much about public transit as Jarrett Walker. He brilliantly exposes many of the truths in transit design that other planners and agencies seem to forget. This book should be mandatory reading for anyone in the field of public transit -- the planners, the bean counters, and the passengers. Only when you have a full understanding of the constraints, the benefits, and the implications of transit decisions can you arrive at the best solution. This book is a cornerstone of that process.

I read this book before taking a graduate public transportation planning class, and I'm glad that I did. Mr Walker's book reads EXACTLY as he describes up front - he explains in extremely plain yet precise language the theories that underlie how transit systems operate, the decision points that planners face, and most importantly, the real-world impacts of those decisions. I learned FAR more from this book than in an entire semester of grad class - I was equipped to take in the theoretical stuff the professor taught, and quickly translate that into how it might have real-world impacts on how people travel. For anyone interested in understanding the different ways that transit operates, and how there are so many decisions that can impact how much utility your community gets out of it, MUST READ.

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