

# MiSustainable Holland

## About this series

The MiSustainable Holland column is a collection of community voices sharing updates about local sustainability initiatives.

## This Week's Sustainability Framework Theme:

**Transportation:** The movement of people, goods, and services within the area is an evolving system that links us to our regional, national and global networks.

## MAX Transit offers multiple benefits for riders and environment

By Lexie Kasper  
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The conversation surrounding the sustainability of public transportation is complex and multi-faceted. It involves topics such as city planning, community building, noise levels, and air quality.

While there are many considerations, public transportation ultimately brings benefits to any community. In Holland, we are lucky to have the [Macatawa Area Express, otherwise known as MAX Transit!](#) If you've seen it around but never used it, take a look at the perks of public transit and then check it out for yourself.

Everyone hates streets clogged with traffic, giant parking lots, the noise of busy streets, and the danger of being a pedestrian or bike rider in traffic-heavy areas. Public transit can address all of these issues by greatly reducing the number of private vehicles on the road. Public transit can drop you off close to concerts, sports games, and community or holiday events with no need to worry about navigating traffic or finding a parking spot.

If a community has options for buses, trains, and bike lanes and they are utilized by residents, that means infrastructure resources can go to those entities instead of building more roads. Municipalities can also focus on sustainable options for those modes of transportation, like permeable pavers, bioswales, and riparian buffers.

Ensuring there is an active user base and community investment in public transportation creates a cycle of improvement where routes, stops, and buses continually get better.

Accessible mass transit has a great impact on the environmental health of a community. Properly maintained buses will leak less anti-freeze, oil, and other vehicle fluids onto the road, which in turn reduces the pollutants in stormwater runoff.

Air quality is one of the biggest positives associated with public transit. According to the [Federal Transit Authority](#), the average driver releases 0.96 pounds of CO2 per mile per passenger, while bus transportation releases 0.64 pounds per mile per passenger. The more people on the bus, the more effective the per passenger emission savings are.

The personal benefits for residents and visitors can't be overlooked, either. Tourists can more easily navigate without adding to the confusion of traffic and parking, seeing more of the community and visiting more local businesses.

Year-round residents get all the aforementioned benefits but there are more to consider. Many people cannot operate a vehicle, and these transportation systems allow them to navigate the community with independence and regularity. There are also significant financial savings for the average person when comparing the cost of gas, tires, oil changes, windshield wiper replacements, and more, with the cost of fixed-route bus fare.

Consider incorporating public transportation into your life. Use it to commute, go downtown for dinner and drinks, recommend it to visiting friends, or head to a holiday event!

- *Lexie Kasper is the Land & Water Outreach Coordinator for the ODC Network.*