

Clean Sustainable Travel Methods - 1/2014

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Shorter Distances: We can improve the many short-distance trips (under 30 miles) we all make by: (1) organizing many short errands for buying food and other home needs by combining three or more into one trip, and (2) making shorter more local entertainment trips to movies, restaurants, plays, concerts, or to enjoy the beach. Other than for elderly or disabled people who cannot walk or ride a bike, there are four much cleaner and healthier ways to go:

- Walking,
- Riding a bicycle
- Public Transportation – train and/or bus – if available
- Car pooling with as many people as possible in the car

The walking and biking – besides being ***totally clean with zero emissions*** – give you needed exercise to both (a) maintain your good health, and (b) help fight and cut down the growing chronic obesity crisis here in the US.

If auto travel is necessary you should (a) seriously consider a hybrid or electric when buying a new vehicle, or (b) rent a hybrid or electric car with much better mileage and lower emissions at igo or zipcar – see <http://www.igocars.org/> and <http://www.zipcar.com/chicago/find-cars>.

Long Distances: For longer distances (over 30 miles) there are currently four approaches to make them cleaner: (1) carpooling, (2) driving a hybrid, (3) taking a bus, and (4) taking a train. For each travel means below, the figure is the tons of CO₂ burned **per person** in a trip from New York City to San Francisco (source <http://planetgreen.discovery.com/tech-transport/plane-train-automobile-travel.html>):

- Carpooling in a hybrid with four people (305 tons)
- Travel in a bus (520 tons)
- Travel by train or driving by yourself in a hybrid car (1,220 tons)
- Driving an average US car (about 23 mpg) by yourself (2,446 tons)
- Flying in an airplane (2,500 tons)

Please note that the bus beats the train only over long distances. On shorter trips of 20 miles, the train emits only 7 lbs. of CO₂, while the bus emits 13 lbs. of CO₂.

In the future – hopefully only five to ten years away – many locations (definitely including Chicago) may have high speed “bullet” trains – at 220 mph – available for travel on. For up to 300 miles distance, these are just as fast as and more efficient than airplanes! ***These trains have virtually perfect safety and schedule records!*** For these reasons, please support the current efforts to fund and build the needed infrastructure. With high-speed rail, the US should rapidly catch up to all other highly developed countries in total miles of high speed rail. See <http://www.midwesthsr.org/> and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High-speed_rail.