

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

ACTIVATES THE SPACE AND IMPROVES SAFETY

Enhancing an otherwise utilitarian transit station with high-quality artwork elevates the space, and sends a message that the physical space and the people served by the station are highly valued.¹ The effect is both welcoming and comforting to riders, who in turn respond with greater respect for the transit environment and their fellow passengers, and improved feelings toward the service provider.²

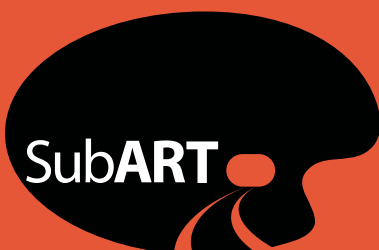
The presence of art in a transit station is shown to reduce crime and vandalism, and increase safety of the environment.³ Artwork can make riders feel more secure by assisting them in navigating confusing, often unfamiliar subterranean territory.⁴ People can perceive a station as dangerous because of poor general appearance, low lighting levels, or lack of maintenance.⁵ Art can be an effective way to break the “cycle of fear” and attract new riders. An increase in ridership means there is more surveillance from other passengers and a reduction in both fear and actual crime risk.⁶



IMPROVES EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

The healthcare field widely recognizes that art reduces stress and anxiety and has a positive impact on health and emotional well-being.^{7 8 9 10} In hospitals, for example, the presence of artwork has been shown to improve patient care, reduce pain, lessen the stress of Emergency Room waiting areas, decrease requests for pain medicine, and control aggressive behavior.¹¹

The presence of art in the transit environment can reduce the stress of travel and make waiting areas more pleasant, engaging, and inspiring. Furthermore, increased neighborhood walkability—which results from accessible and attractive public transportation—is associated with reduced symptoms of depression.¹²



Taking Art Underground

INCREASED RIDERSHIP IMPROVES PUBLIC HEALTH

Engaging with art in the transit corridor has multiple public health benefits, including reducing stress and social isolation, instilling a sense of pride and belonging among citizens, and improving understanding among diverse populations; furthermore, by increasing ridership, art promotes physical activity.^{13 14 15 16 17}

Choosing mass transit makes people more active.^{18 19} Individuals who use public transportation get over three times the amount of physical activity per day as those who don't.²⁰

²¹ Inadequate physical activity contributes to numerous health problems, causing an estimated 200,000 annual deaths in the U.S. and significantly increasing medical costs.²² Many experts believe that increasing walking is the most practical way to improve public fitness.²³

Wener and Evans (2007) found that train commuters, as compared to car commuters, averaged 30% more walking, more frequently reported walking for 10 minutes or more, and were 4 times more likely to achieve the 10,000 daily steps recommended for fitness and health.²⁴ Art enhancements of public transit can lead to long-term public health benefits: as more travelers choose mass transit over cars, air quality will improve, making the area healthier and safer for all living things. Illness related to poor air quality is estimated to cause as many deaths per year as traffic accidents.²⁵ Fewer cars and more people also lead to safer sidewalks and crossways for pedestrians and bicyclists. Transit-oriented communities have only about a quarter the per capita traffic fatality rate as residents of automobile-dependent communities.²⁶



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