

# **Building Human Capital and Career Pathways for Public Transportation**

## **Congressional Briefing: Transporting Young Black Men to Quality Careers**

**Brian J. Turner**, Executive Director, Transportation Learning Center

**Jeffrey L. Brooks**, Administrative Vice-President and Director, Transit Division,  
Transport Workers Union of America; Board Member, TLC

**September 26, 2012**

## Career Opportunities in a Growing Industry

- Fast job growth in transportation overall, and public transit in particular
  - Transit rail ridership up 75 percent since 1995
  - 38 percent job growth projected over next 10 years
- Up to 40 percent of the transit frontline workforce expected to retire within the next ten years
- Big city agencies face major skill shortages in years ahead, and major transit cities includes large minority populations

# Good Frontline Transit Skilled Jobs and Career Ladders for Urban Youth

- Family-supporting jobs - good wages and benefits
- Career ladders based on further training, education, growth and career advancement
- Careers concentrated in urban communities
- Strong union role in industry, with many Black union presidents and officers
- A green industry, benefitting the community and offering opportunities for specialized training in green technologies

## African-American Employment in Transit: A Growing Share, with Critical Opportunity Gaps

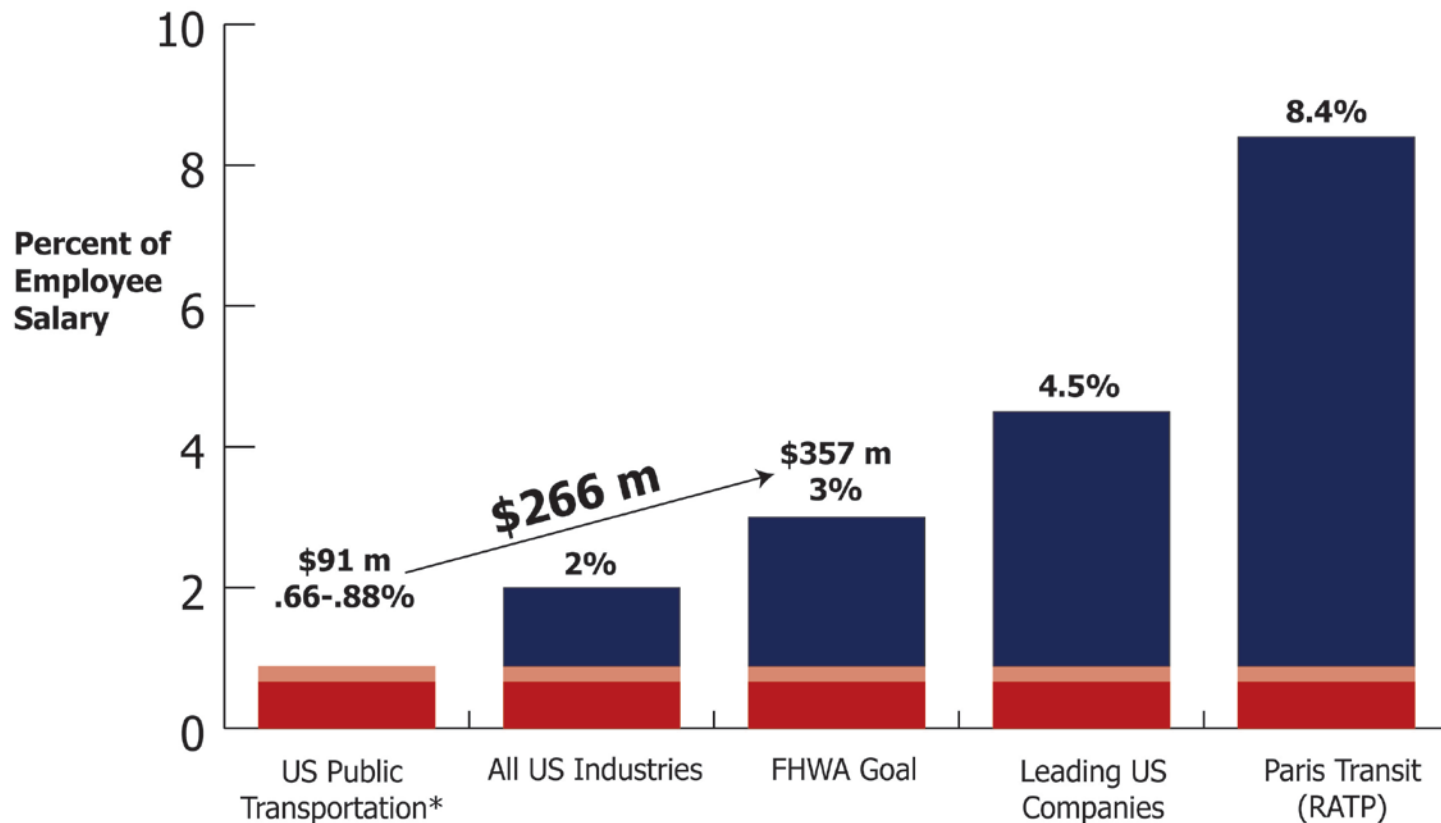
- Transit provides good job opportunities for urban populations – 18.3 percent of frontline jobs nationally are held by African-Americans
- Many big urban systems are becoming majority minority, with New York City Transit at 73 percent
- Less minority access to higher skilled technical jobs – only 4 percent of bus/truck mechanics nationally

# Challenges for Transit Workforce Policy

- Overall level of investment in human capital is very low – less than 1 percent of payroll
- Greatest need in transit workforce development: Frontline workers – operations and maintenance workers, 80 percent of transit employees
- April DOT Workforce Summit: Leaders of Railroad, Highway, and Transit – the frontline workforce is our greatest workforce need

## Transit Policy Lags in Human Capital Investment

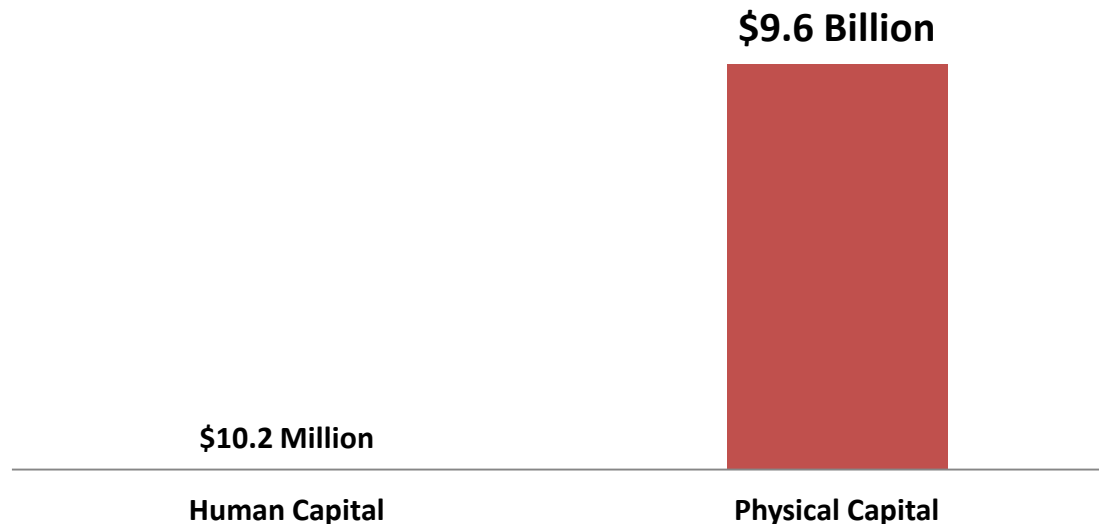
Public Transportation Behind the Curve on Training Investment



\*Estimated by the Transportation Learning Center based on a 2010 survey of the transit industry

## *Federal Transit Investment in Human Capital 0.1% of Physical Capital*

- Annual federal investment in transit workforce development (UTC training, NTI, TLC, SCATTC, Innovative Programs, etc.) – **Total \$10.2 million**
- Annual federal investment in physical capital – **Total \$9.6 billion**



# But Current Surface Transportation Act is Deficient on Human Capital

- Transit Capital Programs do not prioritize investment in human capital (0.5 percent requirement)
- Transit's workforce development programs need to support Career Pathways for moving community members into quality transportation careers
- Need to link strong Career Pathways with effective Career Ladder programs to move people up within the industry – Philadelphia example



# Need to Build Career Pathways Connecting Young Black Men to Quality Transportation Careers

- 1. Include Human Capital Investment in Transit Capital investment**  
**Funding:** Raise transit human capital investment to FHWA target: 3 percent of payroll
- 2. Support Targeted Career Pathways Partnerships connecting Urban Youth to Quality Transportation Careers**
  - Partner Schools with Transit Agencies and Unions
    - High schools, middle schools and post-secondary
  - Hands-on and problem-solving approaches to learning
  - Mentoring, job shadowing and internships
  - College credit for standards-based training at work
  - Prepare students for challenging skilled training programs
  - Direct connection to industry career ladder programs

# Career Pathways for Young Black Men: Everyone Benefits

- **Young Black Men:** Pathways to high quality jobs linked to career ladders and access to ongoing training and education
- **Schools:** Higher retention, graduation and job placement rates – best practice graduation rates of 98 percent in quality CTE programs
- **Industry:** Quality training meets critical skill needs with strong return on investment. Other transportation sectors (railroad, airline, trucking) have similar skill needs
- **Community:** More people with strong jobs skills and careers. Plus, quality transportation systems improve the environment and access to jobs in the region

More information at [www.TransportCenter.org](http://www.TransportCenter.org)

- Jeffrey L. Brooks - [JefLBrooks@TWU.org](mailto:JefLBrooks@TWU.org)
- Brian J. Turner – [BTurner@TransportCenter.org](mailto:BTurner@TransportCenter.org)