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# Lack of transportation options in San Antonio limits job, education opportunities, local experts say

Voters to consider 1/8 cent sales tax to fund workforce program until 2025



A city's ability to provide multiple transportation options is crucial in creating equitable opportunities for all, according to local experts.

"We have a big city, and the opportunity for people to access quality jobs and school and other resources, including groceries, is not the same throughout our city. And that's where transportation comes in," said Greg Griffin, an assistant professor of urban and regional planning at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Transportation has become a topic of conversation in recent months and years as the City of San Antonio finds ways to improve public transit and transportation infrastructure.

In November, [voters will consider a 1/8 cent sales tax](#) to fund a workforce training and education program, which would start in 2021 and run through 2025.

Beginning in January 2026, the revenue from the 1/8 cent sales tax would be shifted to VIA Metropolitan Transit to fund transportation improvements. Until then, VIA will be forced to get creative with its budget.

Amanda Merck, a former VIA board of trustee, said it's impossible for VIA to provide reliable and expansive public transit when it has been historically underfunded.

"I understand VIA does not work for people right now. That's because it's a sprawling, massive city, and the transit agency is so underfunded," she said.

Transit agencies in Houston, Dallas, and Austin receive a full cent from sales tax compared to VIA, which receives 5/8 of a cent.

Despite receiving fewer operating dollars, VIA describes itself as "the most efficient system within the peer group of the largest Texas transit agencies" in its [latest annual financial report](#).

Thalia Vazquez, 17, who relies on the bus to get to work, said she has been late several times and is on the verge of losing her job.

"I'm pretty scared of losing my job. Everything is just crumbling," she said.

Merck says stories like Vazquez's show the need for more public transit funding.

"They're late one time, they can lose their job. Like, they don't have the security that someone maybe on salary would have. And so, that introduces additional inequities," she said.