

Price and values of institutional climate resilience: A case study of environmental change decision-making for an urban mass transit agency

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Impact classifications drive understandings of the vulnerability of transport to climate change while policy, management and investment responses among institutional actors and agents such as mass transit agencies remain an obscure topic in environment, transportation, hazards and urban research. Our lack of knowledge about environmental change responses by transport institutions has important implications and consequences for diverse commuters and neighborhood communities in times of severe environmental, social and economic stress.

This poster highlights urban mass transit climate resilience efforts through policy shifts, technological innovation, operational responses, and investment strategies. The following question is addressed:

When does institutional decision-making for an urban mass transit agency lead to both urban resilience and vulnerability?

This case study explores the challenges, constraints and sensitivities a mass transit agency faces while attempting to mitigate severe weather impacts and adapt to climate change. Semi-structured interviews found executive-level transit agency officials to be unapologetic for decisions made toward enhancing the climate resiliency of their systems, infrastructure and modes despite what might be interpreted as producing vulnerable impacts among commuters and different community types. Mapping efforts identify places of chronic hazard stress and public concern that current institutional policies and operational approaches are ill-designed to mitigate or adapt.