The Brookings Institute has a new study out (and a really nifty interactive website) that ranks cities around the country on their public transit friendliness. Los Angeles comes out near the top of the list by one important measure: resident access to public transit, defined as living close to a transit stop. 96% of LA residents meet Brookings' criteria on that front, making the city number 2 in the country for access. The figure confirms what anyone living in Los Angeles already knows — L.A. bus service has wide coverage. We also rank highly on the time it takes to wait for a bus or other means of public transportation to arrive: the average time is 6.2 minutes during rush compared with the average metro area where the wait is a bit more than 10 minutes. But the news isn't all rosy for residents of the City of Angels: we rank poorly on how long it takes to get to a job. Only 26 percent of all our jobs are reachable via public transportation in less than 90 minutes. That's below the 30 percent metropolitan average. On the other hand, low income residents of Los Angeles fare better with respect to job access: low income residents can reach 37 percent of the city's jobs in under an hour and a half. Given that low income residents are much more likely to be "zero vehicle" households (that's apparently the term of art for folks who don't have cars) the city appears to be — at least to some degree — aligning public transit services with actual need (though the financing of expensive train service, to the suburbs, often at the expense of bus service is a different story.)

Brookings also created an index to rank cities and public transit that combines all the above data about access, length of ride and so forth. Los Angeles ranks 24th out of 100 cities and metro areas. So while it may be true that nobody walks in L.A., at least most of us can take the bus. Even if it takes awhile to get where we're going.