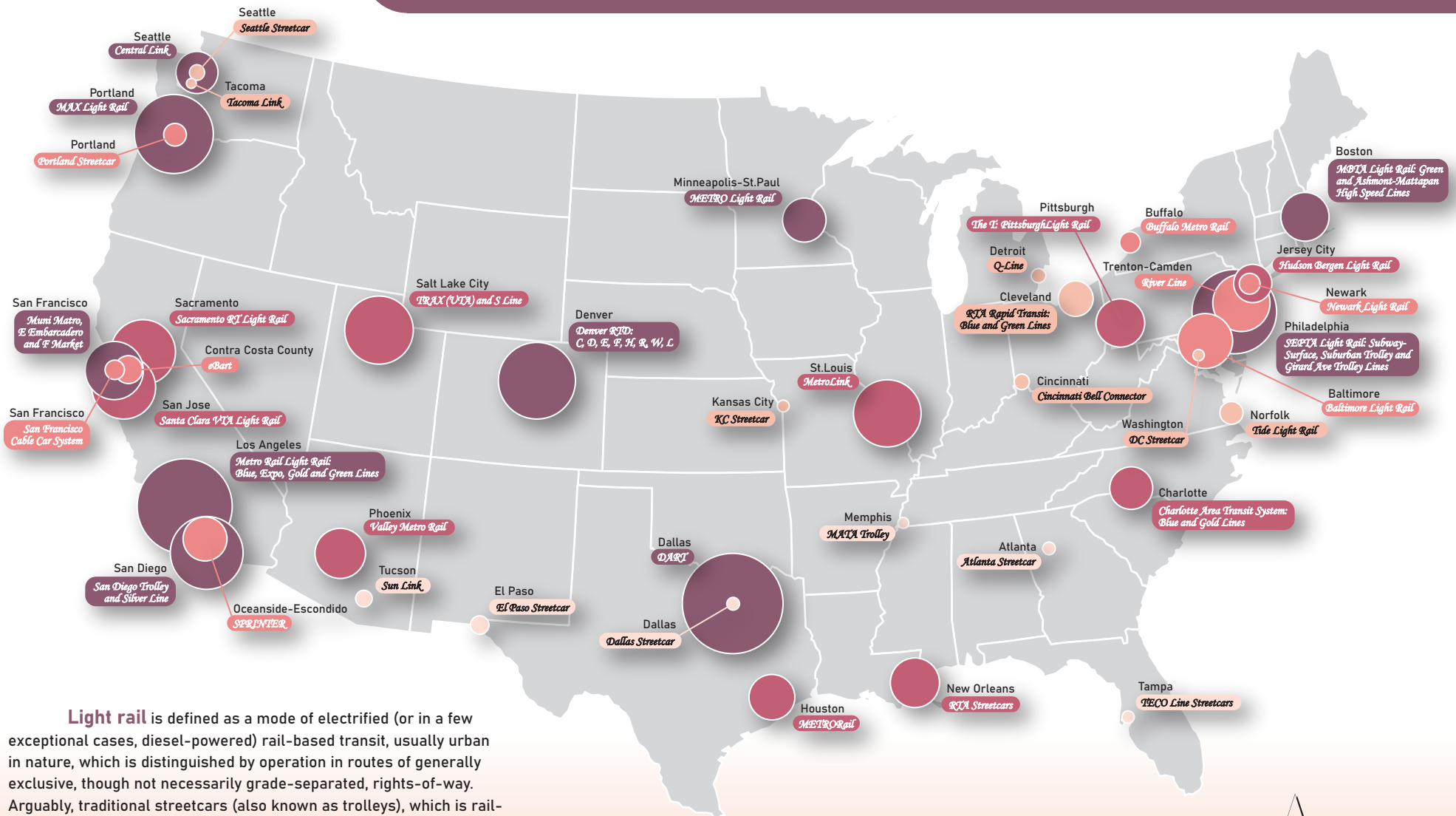
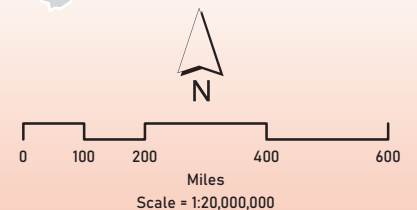
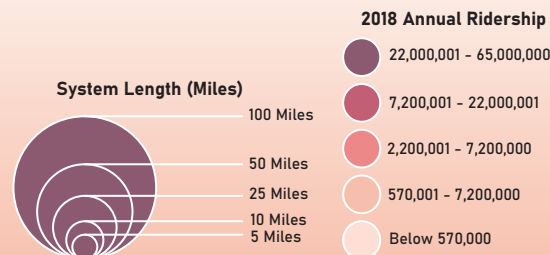


# United States Light Rail Systems by Length and Ridership



**Light rail** is defined as a mode of electrified (or in a few exceptional cases, diesel-powered) rail-based transit, usually urban in nature, which is distinguished by operation in routes of generally exclusive, though not necessarily grade-separated, rights-of-way. Arguably, traditional streetcars (also known as trolleys), which is rail-based transit that takes place in shared roadways with automobile traffic (i.e. with street running) and thus does not operate in exclusive rights-of-way, can be considered to be a sub-set of light rail.

According to the American Public Transportation Association, of the roughly 30 cities with light rail systems in the United States, the light rail systems in six of them (Boston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Portland (Oregon), San Diego, and San Francisco) achieve more than 30 million unlinked passenger transits per year. The United States has a number of light rail systems in its mid-sized to large cities.



Map projection: USA Contiguous Albers Equal Area Conic; Central Meridian = -98, Standard Parallels = 30 and 48, Latitude Of Origin = 39.  
 Map designed and produced by Shujin Wang (2019) using ArcMap 10.7 and Adobe Illustrator.  
 Sources: Natural Earth: US States and Cities/2019; Wikipedia: United States Light Rail Systems by Ridership ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_United\\_States\\_light\\_rail\\_systems\\_by\\_ridership](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_States_light_rail_systems_by_ridership))/2019.