

# Organizing Transit Riders: A How-To Manual

Good Jobs First  
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# **Organizing Transit Riders: A How-To Manual**

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# America's Transit Workers Keep America Moving!

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## Introduction

This manual was inspired by Larry Hanley and the work we at Good Jobs First have done together with him and his fellow leaders at the Amalgamated Transit Union since he was elected ATU International President in September 2010. It was also inspired by the dozens of passionate community organizers for transit we have met or gotten to know better, some of whom are featured in interviews and case studies here.

Just four days after he took office, Hanley met with us and we jointly agreed to stage a “boot camp” for training transit rider organizers. Held in Chicago just two months later, the boot camp attracted about 100 attendees—half were leaders of ATU locals and other transit unions and half were community organizers. By popular demand, we staged a second boot camp of the same size in March 2011 near Washington, D.C. Other unions of transit workers, especially the Transport Workers Union, also sent local leaders to the boot camps.

The boot camps became so popular with ATU leaders that four annual regional training conferences the union held later in 2011 all changed their agendas to bring in community activists and add sessions on rider organizing.

Gene Russianoff of the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign in New York calls Larry Hanley “a legend.” That’s because in the mid-1990s, as president of the small ATU local on Staten Island facing threats of service cuts, Hanley convinced his members to contribute about \$180,000 from their paychecks to fund community organizers. The resulting rider campaign won funding for better equipment—and fare *reductions* that boosted ridership—from borough, city and state officials (including then-Mayor Giuliani and then-Governor Pataki) who were hardly known as boosters of transit.

Today in America, transit riders and workers face a perverse crisis. On the one hand, good news: because of surging gasoline prices and in spite of the Great recession, transit ridership is setting post-war records. And federal support for transit also set records in 2009 and 2010, especially because of the Recovery Act (although most of those federal dollars were restricted to *capital* budgets). On the other hand, bad news: state and local tax revenues that fund transit *operations* (along with fares) have been severely depressed. Those state and local shortfalls have triggered the worst wave of service cuts, fare hikes and transit worker layoffs in post-war history. More people want to ride, but they are paying more and getting less service.

Creating even more uncertainty has been the failure of the U.S. Congress to reauthorize the federal Surface Transportation Act. It expired in September 2009 and has simply been extended since, without badly needed reforms. The Transportation for America coalition and many of its 500-plus members argue that the Act desperately needs to be modernized in ways that improve transit funding, pedestrian safety, and bicycling options—and rebuild our nation’s existing but crumbling roads and bridges.

Despite federal gridlock, Americans outside the Beltway continue to support transit at an astonishing rate. Even during the Great Recession and the weak recovery since, three-quarters of the time voters continue to raise their sales or property taxes to sustain or improve transit. Clearly, there is enormous public support in America for public transportation, even among people who do not rely upon it every day.

This manual is dedicated to those transit riders who have endured the worst of times, and especially to those who have organized and fought back. As we explain in the chapter on what successful campaigns have in common, there is an incredible rainbow of grassroots groups that have taken on transit as an issue. And as we learned while recruiting groups that were eager

to attend the boot camps, there are many more getting started.

By knitting together many stories and best practices we featured at the boot camps, and by gathering together the best technical resources we have found, we want to help anyone seeking to organize riders get started quickly—and help those already organizing get better! And by listing and linking to all of the rider-organizing groups we have found, we are encouraging groups to reach out to one another.

We also have started a list-serv for transit rider organizing. If you are organizing riders and wish to be on that list-serv, or if you have questions or suggestions, I want to hear from you.



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## Six Things Most Successful Transit Campaigns Have in Common

**Organized Riders:** History is clear (as you might guess from the thrust of this manual): the people who depend upon transit have the most powerful and effective voices. As you will read in the interviews and case studies here, riders talking to fellow riders to identify key issues and work together for solutions is the heart of any successful campaign. It is also critical to building enduring organizations of people who care the most and will keep fighting the hardest. Although it is clear from the history of ballot initiatives that lots of people who mainly get around by car will vote to tax themselves for transit, they only do so because they have been convinced that transit really matters to many members of their community and to their regional economy. And although it is also clear that pollsters and targeted messaging can help win campaigns, that is only true because it is the voices of organized riders being amplified.

**An Institutional Base Sponsor:** In recruiting community-based organizations (CBOs) to attend our two community-labor “boot camps,” we found a fantastic rainbow of transit rider groups and almost all of them were projects of non-profit groups with

broader missions. The oldest such groups, profiled here in interviews, include the Straphangers Campaign in New York, a project of NYPIRG (a student-led environmental group) and the Bus Riders Union in Los Angeles, a project of the Labor/Community Strategy Center (which runs diverse social-justice campaigns). The Transportation Equity Network of the Gamaliel Foundation, a faith-based CBO network, had the greatest number of participating groups. We also had participants from national groups as diverse as Transit Riders for Public Transportation (a network sponsored by environmental justice organizations), the Partnership for Working Families and Jobs with Justice (two activist labor-community networks), the Sierra Club (the large environmental group), USAction (whose state affiliates are often known as Citizen Action), the Industrial Areas Foundation (the nation’s oldest faith-based CBO network), PICO (another faith-based network)—even the International Workers of the World or “Wobblies.” We also found rider campaigns sponsored by stand-alone non-profits whose main concerns include affordable housing, civil rights, disability rights, consumer rights, and the environment. Although there are a few groups founded purely for transit rider advocacy, such as Transit for Livable Communities in the Twin Cities, they are the exception.



### **Policy Research and Advocacy**

**Expertise:** Almost every successful group or campaign we've encountered has either in-house capacity or a coalition partner that can analyze the intricacies of transportation funding and bureaucracies. Public transportation is not exactly rocket science, but with funding coming from federal, state and local sources—and sometimes from multiple programs within a given level of government—coalitions do need to know the rules about money and who controls it. Expertise can usually be accessed from transit worker unions or from groups such as universities or environmental organizations, or from Smart Growth America or Transportation for America or their state or local affiliates—the U.S. is blessed with a lot of transportation wonks. So if your coalition does not yet include such skills, chances are you can find them quickly.

**Employer Support:** We are astonished that there is not yet a national movement of employers demanding better transit service. But in some successful campaigns, individual local employers or groups such as local Chambers of Commerce have played a good role, making public endorsements and sometimes giving financial support. We gather that companies have motives both pragmatic (traffic congestion makes transit critical, or low-wage

employees can't afford cars) and idealistic (taking pride in being green). Because we think this is such an under-realized area for building support for transit, Good Jobs First is now undertaking a project to develop a national list of pro-transit employers, and to write case studies on how some have effectively organized themselves for transit. We expect to complete it by the middle of 2012.

**Passion and Creativity:** In the interviews and case studies here, you will read about mock funerals, civil disobedience, dirty-bus polls, civil rights lawsuits, Lenten fish fries, gag fortune cookies, Abe Lincolns, Halloween treats, student protests, phone texting, prayer vigils—and lots of bus riding, leafleting, door-knocking and phone banking. Because transit is a public utility, a familiar space, and such a vital lifeline for so many people, it encourages bold, creative ways of organizing. Making campaigns fun and events memorable are, of course, staples of successful community organizing. But because transit spans so many neighborhoods and because constituent issues can be so varied, rider organizing offers a really big canvas of possibilities.

**Community-Labor Solidarity:** The Amalgamated Transit Union and other transit unions like the Transport Workers Union realize that not every rider loves their bus driver or transit operator. But many riders do appreciate what drivers, agents, mechanics and operators endure, and they realize the jobs can be dirty and dangerous—and discouraging if a transit agency is poorly managed. As riders form groups and build coalitions, they usually build strong ties to transit worker unions—and come to see insensitive transit agencies and unresponsive elected officials as the real problem. Another area where we think transit organizing can be improved (besides among employers) is among unions whose members depend on transit (but do not work on it). In most urban centers of the U.S. there are many members of unions—SEIU, AFSCME, AFT, UFCW, Unite Here and others—who depend on transit, *but they have never been asked as a group to join rider campaigns!* See our Organizing Checklists chapter for ideas.

## **Interview: Gene Russianoff, Staff Attorney, NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign (New York City)**

**Q:** You're the granddaddy of transit rider groups in the U.S.: you've been around since 1979, you have used numerous strategies and tactics—so what pearls of wisdom would you share with a newly-forming group in a city with no sustained rider organizing history? What are some basic Dos and Don'ts?

**A:** My most important piece of advice is talk to the riders. Find out what's on their minds. Is it unreliable or inadequate service, not enough at night, too little on the weekend? Is it the fare? Do they want discounts? Is the system aging badly, with not enough money for repair? Is it unsafe? Too crowded? And while you are at it, talk to established grassroots groups and labor unions and find out what their members care about. It couldn't hurt to take a look at opinion polls of riders, either existing ones or ones that a college might do for free or low cost.

**Q:** Can you quickly describe your budget, staff size and division of labor?

**A:** We have a full-time coordinator and an organizer, a half-time advocate (me) and pieces of a researcher (in New Paltz, N.Y.), a graphics artist (in Takoma Park, Md.) and a web master (in Ann Arbor,

Mich.)—bless the wide open spaces of the web. Two things about our budget: 1) at about \$225,000 it's much less than the salary of our top transit official; and 2) Straphangers has the great benefit of being a project of the New York Public Interest Research Group, a college student-directed environmental and multi-issue organization. That greatly helps us with volunteers and energy.

**Q:** The Metropolitan Transportation Authority is a state agency and some of the reforms you have won have to do with basic public-agency processes. Can you explain a little?

**A:** I visited the Bus Riders Union in the early '90s in Los Angeles and found out their transportation agency had a public speaking period before the start of meetings. You could tell your concerns to the big cheeses and the media present. So I drafted a piece of legislation calling for a public speaking period before New York's MTA meetings and it passed. It's been a great asset for making your point. For example, in 1995 the MTA considered ending transit passes. Eighty people spoke over three hours, and when the dust cleared, the passes were kept.

Also, we worked with a very effective former state legislator (NYS Assemblyman Richard Brodsky), to create a new NYS Authority Budget



Figure 1: Straphangers coalition partners gathering petition signatures from subway riders.

Office that monitors public authorities like the MTA and promotes public awareness and transparency.

**Q:** You have earned a lot of media coverage over the years. What lessons can you pass along about getting the media’s attention?

**A:** You have to have a sense of humor. One of our most fun and effective actions was to hand out doctored fortune cookies to transit decision-makers at a fare increase hearing. Like: “Raising the fare will wreak havoc with your love life.” It also helps to publicize

poor bus service in a crowded city by giving the slowest buses “Pokey Awards.”

We like printed signs with the same message, such as “Governor to Riders: Drop Dead.” We like to stick to a message. Other groups prefer individually drawn signs, especially as a good pre-event activity. To each his or her own. We “trick or treat” the MTA board before every Halloween and usually give out doctored candy like “Fleece Us Pieces” or “You Must Think We Are From Mars Bars.” Lots of “Scary Transit” signs.

**Q:** You have a website ([www.straphangers.org](http://www.straphangers.org)) where you sometimes conduct polls, an e-mail list with 16,000 recipients, and a Facebook page with 1,000+ followers. What works best for, say, turnout at a public hearing or a petition drive? And where do you see social media headed for rider organizing?

**A:** The tried and true method is to link up with organizations that can produce numbers, like the year we rocked a fare increase hearing with members of 1199/SEIU [a large union of healthcare workers]. In a big city like New York, the next most effective method of getting turnout is getting media coverage of the upcoming hearings.

The jury is still out in my mind on how effective social media is here. Last year, two high school students got more than 100,000 fans on their Facebook page on the possible loss of student passes. It led to one good large citywide protest, but then not much. Meanwhile, a grassroots student group – the Urban Youth Collaborative – was a presence at all the MTA hearings and got the MTA CEO to agree to a meeting. In the end, the passes were kept, although the MTA got a lower government subsidy to support the passes.

**Q:** Are your polls really polls or are they so-called “push polls?”

**A:** They are Internet polls of our e-subscribers, so they are not a random sample. But we always write the questions as neutrally as possible to get good information. We and Transportation Alternatives just put out a poll on the qualities that riders are looking for in a new MTA CEO [the current CEO recently resigned].

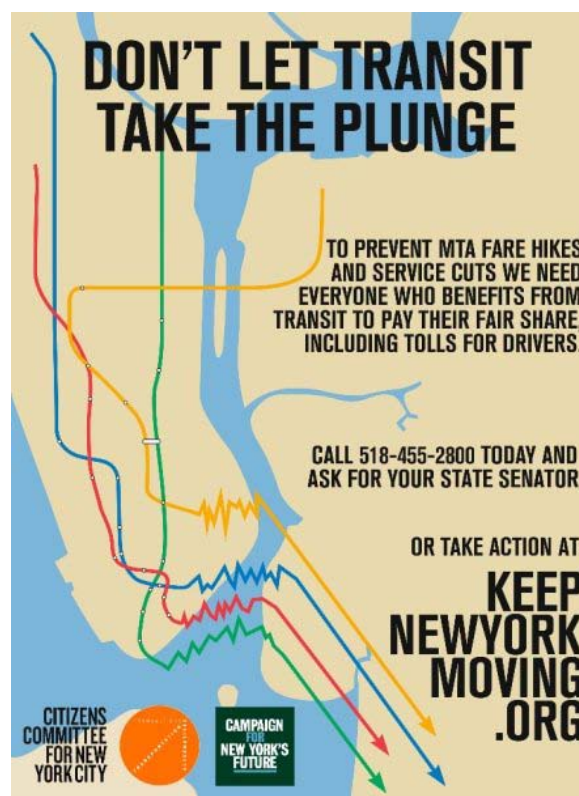


Figure 2: Straphangers call for state funding.

**Q:** You have sued the MTA three times. Was that effective?

**A:** Yes, all three had a major impact. In 1995, together with the New York Urban League, we filed a federal lawsuit (modeled on the Bus Riders Union suit in Los Angeles), charging that a fare hike violated civil rights laws. We won in the district court, but the decision was stayed in the Second Circuit. However, the case created a huge political deficit for the then-Governor; coupled with rider organizing, the suit led directly to the MTA offering unlimited-ride MetroCards in 1998.

In the second case, the MTA proposed closing scores of subway station booths in 2000 without a hearing. We and Transport Workers Union Local 100 [the main union of MTA workers] sued, and the court ruled that the MTA had to hold hearings before permanently removing station booth clerks. There ensued a decade of hearings, delaying the MTA's proposed closings. The hearings were a key focal point in trying to preserve the safety and assistance brought by these clerks.

In 2003, we sued again, in state court against a fare hike, charging that the MTA had misled the public on its finances. We won in the trial court, but

the decision was overturned on appeal. However, the MTA was forced to make its budget process more transparent.

All the cases created great media and organizing opportunities. It's also true that lawsuits suck up a lot of time and energy, so they can be a mixed bag.

**Q:** You've staged mock funerals at endangered stations and "negative ribbon cuttings" at stations losing their scheduled improvements. What advice can you give about staging such events? How do you make them pop?

**A:** We were desperate for ways to get the media to cover capital repair funding and service cuts. We got a great volunteer who played the bagpipes [which are routinely played at the funerals of emergency responders in NYC]. And I write a mean eulogy.

**Q:** Based on in-the-field surveys, you give out "Pokey Awards" for the slowest buses and "Shmutz Awards" for the dirtiest vehicles. What's the point here? Who is the audience?

**A:** Both awards give volunteers a bite-size way to channel their concern about the subways by rating the routes and lines. It's helped a great deal to put

pressure on to improve bus service, like our finding that 25 of 197 bus routes had longer traveling times than taking Amtrak from NYC to Philadelphia. We now have two “bus rapid transit”-like routes, with three more promised.

**Q:** You have several other groups advocating on transit in New York City (Transportation Alternatives with its Rider Rebellion campaign, and environmental justice groups such as WE-ACT, Uprose and the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance). Do you see them as competitors? How does the Straphangers Campaign relate to these groups?

**A:** New York is a huge transit system, with millions of riders. So the more the merrier. I think the Straphangers Campaign has a good reputation for working in coalition. We are always circulating group sign-on letters, always going to group meetings. You really can't win anything important unless you do it in coalition, acknowledging that it is always challenging to achieve consensus even in like-minded groups.

**Q:** Finally: as the granddaddy of transit rider groups in the U.S., you also have the best historical perspective: so how dire do things look for transit now (or not)? Is rider organizing more or less needed now?

**A:** In truth, it's pretty tough times. But transit is only going to do decently if riders speak. And that requires transit organizers and advocates.

**Learn more** about the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign at:

<http://www.straphangers.org/aboutus.html>

<http://www.straphangers.org/25th/essay.pdf>

Interview conducted by e-mail  
September 6, 2011.



Figure 3: Members of the Bus Riders Union march through Union Station on their way to a MTA board meeting.

### Interview: Esperanza Martinez, Senior Organizer, Bus Riders Union (Los Angeles)

**Q:** The BRU's best-known accomplishment is your civil rights lawsuit and the Consent Decree it won. Can you briefly explain the case and how it played out for Los Angeles bus riders?

**A:** In October of 1996, we won a landmark civil rights Consent Decree, following the class action civil rights lawsuit we brought in 1994. The case, Labor/Community Strategy Center and

Bus Riders Union et al. v. Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, was brought by the BRU and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund to challenge racial discrimination in the transportation policies of the MTA.

We charged the MTA with violations of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act by establishing a discriminatory, separate, and unequal transportation system while using federal funds. The Consent Decree was a 10-year contract in which MTA was obligated to improve L.A.'s bus system and make the bus system and



transit-dependent riders its first priority for funding. The agreement placed the Bus Riders Union in a unique role as the court-appointed class representative of L.A.'s 500,000 bus riders.

When we first brought this case to court, MTA's discriminatory policies had virtually destroyed the bus system—the transit lifeline to employment, education, public services, extended family, cultural and recreational sites for bus riders who are nearly 90 percent people of color, 60 percent women, and overwhelmingly low-income. Our main goal with the Consent Decree was to begin to remedy decades of MTA policies of racial discrimination as one way of improving the material conditions of LA's transit-dependent riders by a) keeping fares low; b) reducing overcrowding by adding bus service hours and purchasing more buses; and c) adding new service that would connect people to major centers of employment, education and health care. Over a 10-year period, implementing the Decree brought close to \$3 billion back into the bus system by keeping money in people's pockets and making improvements. Key to these victories was not only the class action lawsuit that was seen as a legal tactic with limitations but also the vibrant movement we built on the streets that challenged the MTA's appeals every step of the way!

**Q:** You make a good point about litigation as a movement tactic. Talk about how you connected organizing to the lawsuit, both during the case and after the agreement.

**A:** As we understood who our key targets were and who had the power to give us what we wanted, we developed internal forms of organization that allowed us to develop the skills of our members and deepened their political understanding of the campaign and how we unfolded tactics. This committee came to be where campaign plans drafted by our leadership body turned into creative and militant action on the street!

When the MTA was about to raise fares, we mobilized hundreds of people to a public hearing to give testimony and apply pressure on the MTA board of directors, the body responsible for implementing racially discriminatory policies. People were prepped and gave compelling and agitational speeches on the potential impacts of a fare increase. We rallied and developed amazing chants like “we’re the BRU and this is our fight, mass transportation is a human right, we want a 50 cent fare and 20 dollar passes, ‘cuz mass transportation belongs to the masses!”

During the Consent Decree we engaged in civil disobedience to pressure the MTA to buy more buses. We organized a fare boycott called “no seat, no fare.” This tactic took months of planning and preparing the everyday bus rider, our key members and bus drivers for the day when riders would refuse to pay for their fare if they did not have a seat on the bus. This tactic was meant to hit the MTA where it hurt and force them to buy more buses to reduce overcrowding. It was successful!

At another moment the MTA was threatening to eliminate OWL service which would hurt many janitors and security officers. In protest the BRU shut down a major intersection – Wilshire Boulevard and Western Avenue – to send a message that we would not just sit there and allow them to cut critical service. We stopped them.

Other tactics since the Consent Decree have included massive marches to City Hall, a hunger fast against the fare increase in 2010, street theater, many press conferences and rallies. Our biggest event, that is the highlight of my life as an organizer, was mobilizing 1,500 bus riders and allies to protest the May 2007 fare increase. Over 350 people testified in protest to the increase and because of the sheer number of people, many overflow rooms were needed. Because the main room reached capacity and the Board would not allow

for more people to come in the main room, students and allies staged an on the spot peoples hearing in the lobby.

**Q:** You have a lot of experience using different ways to reach out to and stay connected with riders, starting with petitions and postcards onto website surveys, an e-mail list and Facebook. What general rules of thumb can you offer new groups about the best way to build the base? Or do rules of thumb only apply to different groups within the base?



Figure 4: BRU urges rider turnout.

**A:** Building an organization of bus riders was new and necessary in the early 90’s. It was a new concept in Los Angeles to jump on the buses, the factory on wheels, and speak to black and brown, working class and underemployed transit dependent riders about their

grievances with the MTA. Yet, these were the people that we knew needed to be leading the fight to improve mass transit in Los Angeles County. We made agitational fliers that spoke to people's anger and gave them hope by asking them to join an organization that was ready to fight.

The rules of thumb for anyone trying to build a base:

- 1) Do your research to identify where the people you believe need to be leading your fight reside. If you are trying to build an organization of parents - where can you find a concentration of these folks?
- 2) Develop a rap that incorporates the problems and conditions and a vision for what you are trying to build – KEY to this is engaging the community you are trying to organize – YOU, the organizer should NOT do most of the talking.
- 3) You get their contact information and you follow up with them. Give yourself concentrated time to remind yourself what were the key things you discussed with this person in order to remind them of why they were so excited to

talk to you again. Push the conversation further, try to gauge unity they may have with your vision, understand their family life and history (you may be talking to the next Rosa Parks and not even know until you find out they were a union organizer in their country). Have a concrete thing to ask them to do: come to a meeting, come organizing with you. Remember, you are building a relationship with this person and follow up is continuous. With our folks it is not automatic that they will come because they get an email, a Facebook message or a text, we believe in building deep relationships with people and having contact with them regularly.

Twenty percent of base building is the outreach and 80 percent is the actual recruitment, development and sustainment of that base. Some groups do door knocking, but for us jumping on the bus is what we do EVERYDAY!

Creating events to recruit people may vary based on who you are trying to recruit. House meetings may work, gatherings at parks, movie nights and discussions – this is where getting to know your base will help you decide the best recruitment tactics.

**Q:** Off the bus, you have organized in churches, service organizations and schools. What church structures are your entry points, and what grade level of students are you organizing?

**A.** The BRU has seen progressive churches as a critical element of our coalition. We have a list of names of progressive priests who have opened up their congregations to us. During the 2007 fare increase when we had a series of tactics moving, we were at churches every Sunday for about one month talking to members of the congregations who were majority Black and Latino and transit dependent.

We made amazing inroads with one church in Los Angeles whose priest has been instrumental in different campaigns by meeting a young man on the bus who was active in the church's band! We hit gold with this one because the priest was a liberation theologian who was ready and willing to call out the ruling class and fend for the poor – not just at the pulpit but on the streets and in the boardroom!

We organize high school youth. Our first youth-focused campaign was around eliminating the tedious bus pass application in which students had to pay \$1, fill out and mail in an application which most times took anywhere from two to three months to receive a

response, if one received a response at all. We organized a group of amazing youth to lead press conferences on campuses and rallies at the board of education where they delivered amazing testimony around the importance of making these discounted passes accessible to all youth but in particular working class youth. They gathered petitions and postcards and ultimately won their demand to eliminate the application process, making bus passes available on school campuses!!

**Q:** Can you briefly describe your budget, staff size and division of labor?

**A.** At the Labor Community Strategy Center, our think tank/act tank and parent organization of the BRU, we have 5 different programmatic campaigns and the BRU is one of them. The BRU has two co-lead organizers, three junior organizers and three organizers in training. At any given day we have about three teams of two people with bilingual capacity either in English and Korean or English and Spanish, organizing in South Los Angeles, East Los Angeles and Koreatown.

One of the co-leads focuses on the campaign work which includes development of campaign plans that include legal and political tactics. Meanwhile the other lead focuses on membership development and always having a pulse of the health and state of

membership. This has included developing workshops and trainings as well as organizing plans.

Two of the three junior organizers along with the three organizers in training and some key members do the outreach and recruitment in helping build our base, and the membership development coordinator supports with the membership/leadership development.

**Q:** You have earned a lot of media coverage over the years. What lessons can you pass along about getting the media's attention?

**A.** The biggest lesson we have learned is that it is hit or miss with the media. One can write the most amazingly creative and sharp media advisory with well thought out messages couched in values and you may not get a single hit. The mainstream media has its own agenda and is very clear what angle of your story they want to highlight. We used to spend a lot of time writing these long and detailed advisories and it was always hit or miss. We have moved away from spending too much time on the details and more time on the day of the event and making aggressive calls and really putting the onus on the media to cover the story.

For example, the BRU had been fighting massive cuts to bus service for two months, cuts that would eliminate

lifelines and create major hardships on LA's transit dependent black and brown communities. The media was not as actively covering the story and we called many times pushing the issue with our media contacts. THEN, one day, I get a call from our office manager saying a major ethnic press outlet had just walked into our office asking for an interview and that a major English language outlet had called saying they would meet an organizer anywhere in the city to get an interview around the story of the day – that bus benches in LA had been removed by a contractor the city had ended its contract with. Although bus benches are a critical part of mass transit infrastructure, we were surprised at how quickly the media jumped on the story! We used the bus bench story to connect our own fight against service cuts - we had to get creative and take advantage of the opportunity.

It is critical to build personal relationships with reporters. Although some media trainings tell you not to challenge or push back on reporters we have been able to do so with a developed sense of trust and vision.

For more on the Bus Riders Union, go to:

<http://www.thestrategycenter.org/project/bus-riders-union>

Interview conducted by e-mail,  
September 29-30, 2011

## Case Study: Metropolitan Communities United – Prop A in St. Louis County: This Time it was Different

By: Katie Jansen Larson

Even before the results were official in the overwhelming April 2010 vote in favor of Proposition A, the debate was raging: What made the difference this time? St. Louis County had rejected transit funding initiatives twice before, but this time the community united and voted 63 percent in favor. What changed so many minds?

Some opponents tried to trivialize the unified show of support by saying it was



Figure 5: Service canceled signs – NOT!

a result of pro-Prop A advertising. Others grumbled about interest groups and agendas to try to diminish the clear victory for all St. Louis metro residents.

Our perspective at Metropolitan Congregations United (MCU)—an interdenominational, multi-racial community organization of religious congregations in the St. Louis metro area—is that grassroots organizing was the difference. More specifically, faith, labor and community groups came together to figure out how to effectively “cover the field” in a coordinated way. The leading groups in the field were MCU and Washington University but there were many other community groups that contributed in significant ways. Citizens for Modern Transit, St. Louis’ leading transit advocacy organization, was the organization that pulled us all together.

MCU began working on the issue in early 2009, even before Prop A existed. When a November 2008 transit funding ballot initiative failed, everyone in the St. Louis region knew Metro was facing budget shortfalls—but no one believed the threats about service cuts. Then, in May of 2009 it happened: the St. Louis region lost one-third of its bus routes. Also, MetroLink (light rail) and Call-a-ride (para-transit) services were cut back. Everywhere we went we saw signs at bus stops that said “Service Suspended.”

Even people who didn't ride the bus felt like they had been punched in the gut when they saw those signs in their neighborhoods. That's when we decided as MCU that we had to do something.

In October of 2009, we held a 200-person transit forum for elected officials to lift up the voices of our community and make sure our representatives heard them. A bipartisan group of county council members, state representatives and Congressman Russ Carnahan came, listened, and declared their support for public transit. Momentum was building.

In December 2009, even before Prop A was officially put on the ballot, MCU leaders rode the MetroLink and collected hundreds of signatures in support of the initiative. We had to convince business leaders and the St. Louis County Council that NOW IS THE TIME to put the measure back on the ballot. Political leaders and local chambers resisted this idea, recalling the fresh defeat in November 2008. Prop A became an unusual case: a very successful campaign with almost no business support.

In early 2010, 13 pastors from around the county and city—Baptists, Catholics, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians—joined with MCU and

took action. They preached about transit at worship services. MCU's leaders canvassed our neighborhoods. We went to as many Lenten fish fries as we could (St. Louis may hold the record for fish fries per capita during Lent), we held prayer vigils, and leafleted at Metro stops. We worked closely with the Greater St. Louis Transit Alliance, the broader coalition of labor, universities, the faith community, disability rights activists and other transit advocates.

One of our unique contributions was that MCU has member congregations in South St. Louis County, an area known for being anti-transit. South County is a conservative part of the region, especially where taxes are concerned. The residents there are mostly white working and middle class people who are used to being dependent on their cars. The rest of the Greater St. Louis Transit Alliance intentionally stayed away from South County and hoped that residents there would forget to show up on Election Day. However, within MCU it was our South County congregations that really took the lead on the campaign from the very beginning. Our primary transit leader Linda Dopuch summed up the sentiments of many South County residents well. She said: "The first time we voted 'no' because we were mad at Metro. We didn't think people were going to be hurt by our



Figure 6: Preaching the gospel of transit in South County.

vote. Now we want to fix this. Our communities need these services.” MCU was the only organization that could effectively organize in South County. The President and CEO of Metro at the time said to MCU’s South County leaders that the measure would not have passed without our work there.

On the days leading up to the election, we again put our own spin on election organizing. Five of our congregations became GOTV sites. We used our congregation lists and the lists of names we had collected throughout the campaign to phone bank for three days including Election Day. It worked well that people were hearing from someone whom they felt connected to, someone they saw in church or met at a fish fry. People are much less likely to hang up on you when you call from their church!

Our biggest organizing takeaways from this campaign were:

**People Power:** The right combination of grassroots groups can organize and win significant regional battles even without business or political support.

**True to Ourselves:** When we work on campaigns we have to do it in a way that is true to our methodology and our constituency. We can’t work off of someone else’s campaign plan.

*Katie Jansen Larson directed MCU during the successful Prop A campaign and now organizes in Columbia, Missouri.*

Learn more about MCU at:

<http://mcustl.com/>





Figure 7: A lawn sign of the “Yes on Buses” campaign.

## Case Study: Spokane Alliance – Spokane Transit Campaigns: Building a Broad Base and Winning Big Twice

By: Wim Mauldin

It’s 2001, and the State of Washington has just suffered a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the foot, passing another tax-reduction initiative. Services of all kinds disappear. In Spokane County on the conservative, eastern edge of the State, transit begins sucking air to the tune of 40 percent per year. (That is, expenditures were 40 percent greater than revenue.)

The only counter-initiative available is a local 0.3 percent sales tax. This is pre-

Tea Party, but not before the invention of condescending, bloated and unresponsive bureaucracies. That describes the public’s view of Spokane Transit Authority, particularly its CEO and weak Board of local electeds. The CEO threatens the community with cutbacks that, because of healthy reserves, won’t be required for another couple of years. The initiative goes down 48-52 percent, but cutbacks don’t materialize. What does materialize is a pink slip for the CEO.

A week or two after that election defeat, Dennis Antonellis, then President/Business Agent of ATU Local 1015, joins the union into Spokane Alliance membership. The Alliance is an affiliate of the Industrial Areas



Figure 8: Planning the Spokane campaign in a church basement.

Foundation and is a mix of 35 faith, labor, education and non-profit dues paying member organizations. Dennis doesn't start by talking about transit. He gets to know other primary players in the Alliance: pastors, business managers, presidents of education associations. He looks for a mutual self-interest in building power.

Two years later, there is a new Transit Authority CEO. When she says that 40 percent cuts are coming, most of the community doesn't believe her. When Dennis says cuts are coming, Alliance leaders believe. At the November 2003 meeting of Alliance member institution delegates, we ask, "what pressures are hitting your people?" And we start with Dennis. As we go around the room, people pick up on what Dennis says about cutbacks; leaders worry about their people getting to worship,

minimum wage workers not getting to jobs, worsening air quality, even the building trades complain about increasing congestion on highways. After the meeting, delegates go back to find out if their organizations and other leaders there will commit to support a ballot initiative against cuts in transit.

At the decision session two months later, leaders commit to the campaign, but only if the Transit Board agrees to be accountable in specific ways. Led primarily by Protestant and Catholic churches, the Alliance meets with Transit Board members to demand that the Board move its meetings to evening hours so working people can bring their concerns, that it televise Board meetings so ordinary people can know what's going on, and that the CEO meet with the Alliance every quarter. With the prospect of bringing hundreds of leaders



Figure 9: Phone banking for Spokane transit.

into the campaign, the Board agrees to the Alliance demands. But, because it has not yet finished its decision-making process, the Board does not agree to put the 0.3 percent tax initiative on the ballot. A steering committee of various allies, including the Chamber, low-income and disability rights advocates, forms to raise money and print signs.

With that decision scheduled for the end of February 2004, the Alliance moves ahead with the Transit Campaign Kickoff Assembly in early February where 250 Alliance leaders confront Board members, pinning down their support. All four television broadcast channels and the print media cover the event. Later, Board members complain that the Assembly forced them to put the measure on the ballot. Our response: “that is what citizens do, they tell their

representatives what they want.”

The week after the Board’s decision to hold a May election, Alliance field operations go into action. Leaders talk to riders on buses and discover that a huge portion are not registered, so VOICES, a low-income organizing ally, begins voter registration. With warming weather in April, the campaign spreads to five weeks of door-knocking and phone banking. Door-knocking focuses on dense 4/7+ voters (residents who have voted in four or more of the last seven elections) in winning precincts with low voter turnout in the transit election two years before, while gathering names/contact info on positive responses for GOTV. Phone banking focuses on less dense swing precincts all over the county.

Sally Stevens is one of 200 trained leaders who belong to Alliance institutions; most participate in multiple campaign events. On Sunday, Sally, an 80-year old church member, stands up during prayer request time and says that if the bus initiative doesn't pass her bus route will be cut. She won't be able to get to the doctor or the grocery store. She asks that people pray. In response to the interest, the pastor carefully selects a second Alliance-trained member to organize a phone bank at the church. The leader organizes a dozen members who meet in the church social hall and call over 800 neighbors urging them to vote for the bus initiative. Afterward, the pastor says her members came out not because they cared about transit, rather "they came because they cared about Sally."

The day before the May 18 election, we recruit five mayors from the eight municipalities of the county and transit area for a phone bank. The strategy was to get access to the media the day before the election for two purposes: 1) to get high profile endorsements immediately before the vote; and 2) to counteract any last minute negative attacks that might surface. The day of the Mayors' phone bank arrives, the media comes, but no negative attacks.

In four months, Alliance leaders make over 11,000 personal contacts with strategically selected voting households. Exit polls show word of mouth influence

increased 10 percent over the previous election driving the transit victory: 69 percent 'yes' to 31 percent 'no'. Only four precincts in the Transit Benefit Area vote 'no'. The key to victory is that transit was not just a quality jobs issue, not just a value for the environment or economic development, or for elders or youth or for worshippers or even riders. Transit combined all these values as it became recognized as a common good of the community.

Four years later, a sunset clause forces a second transit ballot. This time the initiative is controversial, because it does not include a sunset clause. The Spokane Alliance organizes more community partners in the campaign. We win with 65 percent.

Now it's 2011 and there are new challenges: cutbacks are taking more quality of life from our community. The battle is not over, but now we have trained leaders and stronger member organizations who know how to win.

*Wim Mauldin was lead organizer for the Spokane Alliance during these campaigns. He is now IAF's lead organizer in Seattle.*

Learn more about the Spokane Alliance at:

<http://iafnw.org/spokanealliance/>

## Case Study: ATU Local 113 – Inoculating Toronto Against Privatization

By: Bill Reno with Greg LeRoy

Early in 2010, as Toronto’s fall mayoral race took shape, members of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 113 and the region’s riders faced a poisonous prospect: four of the five leading candidates were talking favorably about privatizing the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), the third-largest transit system in North America.

To be sure, the TTC had problems, most of them caused by the Province of Ontario, which had stopped contributing to the TTC starting in 1996, under Conservative Party leadership. Prior to then, the province had contributed 50 percent of the operating deficit of Toronto’s growing transit system, and 75 percent of its capital budget. Suddenly, there was nothing from the senior levels of government. The resulting financial squeeze forced TTC to raise fares and defer maintenance, and made service expansion impossible, even as the region’s population and economy grew. The TTC became the least-subsidized, most fare-dependent transit system in North America, with a farebox recovery ratio of 70 per cent, the highest on the continent.

As the region kept growing, more people were forced to drive, making traffic congestion and air quality worse. Declining service levels and rising fares spurred calls for privatization. But the union and its allies knew that transit is not a for-profit business, and that privatization would only cause more disinvestment and service cutbacks.



Figure 10: One of the campaign's anti-privatization ads.

Deciding they needed to make privatization “radioactive” in the mayoral debate, the 10,000 members of Local 113, at the urging of President Bob Kinnear, voted to authorize special temporary assessments that would raise about \$900,000 for an intensive campaign—Keep TTC Public—in the two months prior to the election. The funds paid for the creation of an interactive website, anti-privatization ads on TTC vehicles and in newspapers, a dynamic [30-second TV ad](#), rider organizing by members and allies, and the production of a [video](#) documenting how privatization had undermined transit

**PRIVATIZING PUBLIC TRANSIT HAS FAILED EVERYWHERE**

Some people think turning over all or part of the TTC to private, for profit companies would make it run more efficiently and at a lower cost. They should do their homework. Transit privatization and so-called “public-private partnerships” have been tried around the world. It’s never worked, anywhere.

Get the facts at [KeepTTCPublic.ca](http://KeepTTCPublic.ca)

**PUBLIC TRANSIT COALITION**

Sponsored by the Public Transit Coalition, a non-partisan organization devoted to safe, reliable and affordable public transit for all Torontonians.

**LONDON: DISASTER**

In London, England, a public-private partnership to refurbish the subway system was a financial disaster for taxpayers.

**MELBOURNE: NIGHTMARE**

In Melbourne, Australia, a city much like Toronto, private operation of the transit system has been a nightmare for commuters.

**VANCOUVER: HUGE SUBSIDIES**

In Vancouver, Canada, a public-private partnership on a new transit line failed to deliver as promised and still requires huge taxpayer subsidies.

**WIN A FREE MONTHLY METROPASS!**

We're giving away a free Monthly TTC Metropass every day until November 1, 2010.

To enter the contest, go to [KeepTTCPublic.ca](http://KeepTTCPublic.ca)

Figure 11: Snappy ads on Toronto transit vehicles drove website traffic.

service in Melbourne, London, Auckland and Vancouver.

A broad coalition of groups—environmental, community, student, and senior citizen—formed the Public Transit Coalition which, although largely funded by ATU Local 113, contributed significantly in the form of research, writing, community organizing around the issue and attending all-candidates’ meetings to ask questions. The Coalition staged press conferences, flyeried at stations, and held events to announce their support. Especially active were the Toronto Environmental Alliance, Canadian Federation of Students, Social Planning Council of Toronto, TTC Riders Group, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, Federation of Metro Tenants, Sierra Club Ontario, Working Women Community Centre, Greenpeace Canada, Toronto and York Region Labour Council, and many more.

As the campaign ramped up eight weeks before the vote, the public got engaged.

Transit became the number one campaign issue. Visitors to the [www.keepttccpublic.ca](http://www.keepttccpublic.ca) website (now mothballed), got to view the TV ad and the longer video, answer a quick poll, and enter a daily contest to win a free monthly TTC pass. The poll showed that over 80 per cent were opposed to privatization of Toronto's transit system.

The video’s most powerful segment focused on Melbourne, where Local 113 interviewed Dr. Paul Mees, a university lecturer who had written his dissertation comparing that city’s transit system to Toronto’s because they had many similarities. When Melbourne’s system was privatized in 1999, contrary to promised benefits, riders suffered major fare hikes and service cuts. Dr. Mees, after detailing that story, urged viewers in Toronto to avoid the painful lessons of Melbourne and Keep TTC Public.

At the campaign’s peak, the video was being viewed about one thousand times per day. The TV ad was aired over 900 times on local Toronto television

stations during the campaign. It was the largest public advocacy campaign ever spearheaded by a union in Canada.



Figure 12: Privatization off the table!

As the campaign took off, the mayoral debate changed. The candidates who had been advocating transit privatization simply stopped talking about it. The evidence against privatization presented by the union and the coalition was so compelling, none of the candidates could take it on. On election night, Local 113 President Kinnear was interviewed by every major media outlet about the outcome. And even though the mayoralty winner was a right wing ideologue who later floated the idea of private funding and operation of a new subway line in Toronto, the notion was dismissed, even ridiculed by other civic leaders and the media.

Although the TTC continues to have challenges like most other major urban systems, no one is talking anymore about privatization and there is a general commitment to addressing its problems within the framework of a publicly-owned and operated utility.

This is in no small part due to the timely intervention at a critical political time by ATU 113 and its allies.

*Bill Reno is a public advocacy campaign consultant to unions and a long-time advisor to Toronto's ATU Local 113.*

Learn more about ATU Local 113 at:

<http://wemovetoronto.ca/>

The campaign television and video (imbedded above) urls are:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFfe7aOIKs4>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAmnmehAy3w&feature=related>

## Case Study: FRESC: Good Jobs, Strong Communities – Keeping Denver’s FasTracks on Track

By: Aurita Apodaca

In 2004, Denver metro voters passed an initiative that would put the Regional Transportation Department (RTD) and the state of Colorado in the federal spotlight. Voters saw the need for a more sophisticated transit system and voted to raise their sales tax four-tenths of a percent (or just four cents for every \$10 purchased) to build out FasTracks, a large new light rail system for the eight-county Denver metro area. Slated for 122 miles of commuter and light rail plus 18 miles of bus rapid transit, this was the biggest new system since Washington D.C.’s Metro. FasTracks was scheduled to be fully operational by 2017.

However, as the buildout progressed, in 2009 RTD announced there was a \$2 billion shortfall. No one could have predicted it, but the crash of the economy combined with sharply higher costs for building materials meant RTD would not be able to complete full build-out of the system until 2042 without an additional tax increase. Advocates planned to go to the voters in 2011 or 2012 with another ballot initiative asking for another .04 percent to fill the

funding gap. RTD began to feel out voter appetite for an additional tax, but this time with a sunset (back to 0.2 percent by approximately 2033-2035, with a full sunset by approximately 2041-2043). This would allow completion of the system by 2019 – two 2 years later than originally promised but still in this decade. The final four lines slated for completion in 2019 do not qualify for federal dollars, so without the tax increase they would be built last, if at all.

FRESC: Good Jobs, Strong Communities formed a coalition with Colorado Environmental Coalition (CEC is the state's largest citizens' group committed to conserving our clean air, water and open spaces), Transit Alliance (a coalition that promotes public transit as part of a balanced transportation system for the Denver metro area), and Colorado Public Interest Research Group (CoPIRG organizes students at local campuses). The Keep FasTracks on Track campaign focuses on educating community members and our membership bases on the importance of supporting an additional tax and ensuring equity along the four lines at risk of not seeing completion until 2042.

As we began to really look at demographics it became clear that the four lines at risk all went through low-income areas and neighborhoods with





Figure 13: Coloradans rally for a fair FasTracks buildout.

high densities of people of color. The groups in the coalition began to meet with their individual members, focusing our message on the compelling number of jobs that would be created: with a tax approval there would be 10,000 jobs created a year, without a sales tax increase we are looking at only about 4,000 jobs per year. We also focused on the fact that FasTracks would reduce traffic, give folks an alternative to driving, reduce air pollution and offer a cheap and convenient way to the airport.

FRESC began attending union meetings and presenting to members about the short-fall and the benefits of supporting

the tax. Our work with the unions connected us to the Safety on Buses Coalition, a community advocacy group focused on bus safety in their Aurora neighborhood located on west Colfax where crime rates on public transit were high. They expressed concern around one of the lines that would run through their neighborhood and give them access to Denver International Airport. They asked FRESC to help them organize riders in their community specifically on this issue.

FRESC conducted several train-the-trainer type classes to help build leaders in the group and teach messaging techniques that would help them move

the transit issue forward in a very real and steady way. FRESC also helped develop a questionnaire that enabled Safety on Buses to engage with transit riders on the bus, addressing their concerns. After three months, the Safety on Buses Coalition had increased its membership from 25 to over 100 and had engaged the attention of their RTD Board member and their city council person.

Since labor is the bulk of FRESC's base, we also worked to organize our retired members which led to work with the handicapped community. We have a retired AFSCME member, Vivian Stovall, who became active reaching out to this community to ensure that as we were thinking about equity on the build-out we were meeting the needs of not only the low-income population and communities of color but also transit-dependent and handicapped populations. "I would support a 0.4 percent sales tax increase," says Vivian. "I think our communities would support it; we need to make people understand what it will do for them. They need to understand how it will affect their everyday life." FasTracks will benefit Vivian's everyday life as she relies on transit to get to the doctor, to the grocery store, to community meetings and events, to all of her volunteer commitments and to the airport.

We launched our Keep FasTracks on Track campaign in June of 2010 by going to prime locations along the four lines at risk and got over 600 postcards signed in support of the completion of FasTracks. We got good media coverage, and we are still working today to ensure that if RTD decides to go to the voters in 2012 for a tax increase, we are ready to ensure that Colorado voters Keep FasTracks on Track.

*Aurita Apodaca is an organizer with FRESC: Good Jobs, Strong Communities.*

Learn more about FRESC: Good Jobs, Strong Communities at:

<http://www.fresc.org/>



Figure 14: Abraham Lincolns launch the 2008 legislative push for Minnesota transit.

## Case Study: Transit for Livable Communities – Winning New Funding Power for Rail and BRT in Minnesota

By: Dave Van Hattum

With a dramatic override of then-Governor Tim Pawlenty’s veto, substantial new funding for transit was included in Minnesota’s 2008 omnibus transportation bill. The new law gave counties statewide the option to increase the local sales tax by a quarter-cent to fund better transit options. Five

metro county commissions, including Hennepin (home to Minneapolis) and Ramsey (home to St. Paul) soon voted to exercise their option, raising approximately \$90 million per year for capital and operating expenses of new transitways (i.e. light rail, commuter rail and bus rapid transit).

For over a decade, Transit for Livable Communities (TLC), a non-profit advocacy organization, along with allied organizations including ATU Local 1005, organized grassroots and grasstops support for new dedicated funding for transit. Transportation Choices 2020

would accelerate the region's transit buildout by a decade, funding a 21st century system of transitways and substantially improving bus service. TLC built a membership of over 10,000 mostly transit riders, and formed the Transit Partners table consisting of like-minded non-profit organizations that were committed to major change in transportation priorities. Transit Partners advocated for a transit vision that most political and opinion leaders were years from supporting.

Transit Partners identified political leaders at the local level but also, critically, in the state legislature where nearly all transit funding decisions in Minnesota are decided. TLC facilitated and packed hearings on the Transportation Choices 2020 legislation both in 2005 and 2007. After the highly successful opening of the Hiawatha LRT in 2004 (TLC organized celebrations at all of the 11 stations on opening day), media and opinion leaders began to support transit in principle but not a specific funding mechanism.

In 2007, working with a broad transportation coalition (road and trucking interests as well as transit), Transit Partners built support in key legislative districts. Large community meetings, creative outreach at park-n-ride lots, and persistent lobbying of swing votes were all employed. TLC was able to build on relationships created

during a 2006 constitutional amendment campaign to fund transportation and transit. These relationships included transit providers statewide through the Minnesota Public Transit Association, over 80 environmental organizations that participate in the Minnesota Environmental Partnership, and key local elected officials and community leaders. ATU Local 1005 also participated in Transit Partners, providing critical field and communications support.

When the I-35 interstate bridge tragically fell into the Mississippi river, killing 13 people in August 2007, the argument for increased spending on transportation infrastructure was ever present. Nonetheless, Republican leadership refused to break their "no new taxes" pledge.

Change, however, was on its way. Transit Partners, through its legislative, organizing and communications subcommittees, worked intensely at many levels. The Metropolitan Transitways Development Board, made up of County Commissioners from metro counties, had met for years and increased its lobbying for a sales tax for transit. Three key local Chambers of Commerce (but not the state Chamber) publicly supported substantially increased funding for transit. With the start of the 2008 legislature falling on



Figure 15: “Don’t X Out Public Transit” rally in September 2011.

Abraham Lincoln’s birthday, Transit Partners was joined by Honest Abe (a big supporter of infrastructure and railroad investment) as he made appearances at the Senate Transportation Committee and the halls of the Capitol, garnering, along with other efforts, very positive media coverage.

Ultimately, grassroots support in our central cities and first ring suburbs, plus a strong voice from Metro area counties insured that the DFL Speaker of the House included new transit funding as a critical component of the transportation finance bill. Overriding a Governor’s veto on a major bill is very rare in Minnesota. No doubt the multi-year organizing efforts of the Transit Partners

coalition as well as its boldness and creativity contributed greatly to this transit win.

While discussion about a new metro sales tax centered on the new transitways, TLC, Transit Partners and the ATU worked tirelessly to insure that expanding the bus system was also part of the plan. With a new sales tax funding the transitways, growing the bus system could, theoretically, rely on increased motor vehicle sales tax revenue. Unfortunately, car sales in recent years have been well below projections and funding transit operations (as opposed to capital expenditures) became a major concern. In the 2011 legislative session transit advocates, and especially the ATU Local 1005, organized feverishly—



Figure 16: Hmong and African-American communities won three more rail stations.

producing over 15,000 postcards to new Governor Dayton and the legislature, packing hearing rooms, and facilitating timely press conferences and other events to oppose Republican-sponsored massive cuts to the transit system.

The new quarter-cent sales tax has made possible construction of the 11-mile Central Corridor LRT line connecting Minneapolis and St. Paul downtowns (opening in 2014), construction of two bus rapid transit lines, and preliminary engineering and other planning for the Southwest LRT line and other transitways. It's nearly certain that the

region's progress on transit funding was a prerequisite for being selected by the HUD-DOT-EPA Sustainable Communities program. The resulting Twin Cities Corridor of Opportunities initiative promotes sustainable, vibrant, and healthy communities along the emerging transitways.

Today, much of the transit conversation has shifted to getting it right beyond the rail; in other words, insuring that all income groups and races benefit from improved transit access and the expected development around transit stations. A key organizing victory was the Stops for Us campaign that

persuaded Central Corridor LRT decision-makers to include three in-fill stations along the East end of the corridor, where large Hmong and African-American populations would have faced long walks and less bus service. This victory was essential to maintaining local support for the regional transit vision given the disgraceful I-94 highway construction in the 1960's, which obliterated the historic, primarily African-American, Rondo neighborhood. The Stops for Us campaign was led by community organizations, a collaborative of all the district councils along the corridor, faith organizations (ISAIAH and others) and the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability.

*Dave Van Hattum is Policy and Advocacy Program Manager for Transit for Livable Communities.*

Transit organizing has led to major victories in the Twin Cities over the past decade, but bold organizing must continue. Funding for expanded bus—not just rail—service, a state financial commitment (by a Republican-led legislature) to the Southwest LRT line, as well as the many details of advancing equitable development at transit stations remain critical campaigns. Clearly, transit does not operate in isolation from housing, employment and community-building. So too must organizing break down silos and engage, educate, and sustain a diverse set of stakeholders to achieve a pressing common good.



Figure 17: Overflow turnout for King County Metro hearing.

## Case Study: Transportation Choices – Saving King County Metro: How to Overcome the Impossible (Washington state)

By: Andrew Austin

The date was July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011. In Downtown Seattle a wall of humanity stretched six blocks down our city’s main avenue waiting to get into the Martin Luther King County Council Building. Upstairs the King County

Council was holding its first of many public hearings on the future of King County Metro<sup>1</sup>. The Council chambers, the overflow rooms, and the hallways were packed with hundreds of transit supporters. The news reports estimated 1,000 or more people showed up for the hearing and over 300 people waited in line for hours to testify in support of saving our buses. One pro-transit county staff veteran commented, “In the

<sup>1</sup> “Metro” is run by King County and serves Seattle and King County with robust bus service. It is by far the largest transit agency in the State of Washington (and the eighth-largest bus agency in the U.S.) with more than 366,000 rides per day.



30 years I've worked in government I've never seen public involvement like this." Every local TV station covered the event, panning their cameras across the endless line of people chanting in support of buses with their handmade "Save Our Metro" signs in hand.

The news stories that night and in the weeks ahead were a welcome pause from the divisive anti-government reporting we've become accustomed to. Reporters could not ignore so many people demanding that the County Council step up to save a service so crucial most citizens couldn't imagine it ever being in jeopardy: their buses. News stories in the weeks ahead did not focus on the temporary \$20 vehicle license fee we were fighting for, or union pay, or supposed government waste. They focused on our story, the story of thousands of individuals who love transit.

### **Weak Tax System Makes Transit Vulnerable**

Similar to transit agencies across the country, nearly every transit agency in Washington State has cut service and raised fares since 2008. But our transit agencies have been hit particularly hard because their operations are very dependent upon local sales taxes, a particularly volatile revenue source.

(Washington State has no income tax; it has the most regressive tax system of the 50 states.) Prior to the announcement of the proposed cuts at King County Metro, the two medium-sized transit agencies in the counties directly south and north of King County had cut or were in the process of cutting 35-45 percent of their bus service! Since Metro is much larger than any other transit agency in the state, its proposed 20 percent cut would have been equivalent (in service hours) to eliminating the entire system at Pierce Transit, the second largest agency in the state.

### **State Gives County a Hard Route to Revenue**

Earlier in 2011, the Washington State Legislature gave Metro the possibility of a revenue source to stave off massive cuts: the temporary authority to raise vehicle licensing fees. Getting this through our divided legislature was a feat in its own right: to get it through the State Senate, an amendment was tacked on allowing the King County Council to impose the fee only with a super-majority. The Council has five Democrats and four Republicans, so to impose the fee to save Metro we had to get all of the Democrats plus at least one Republican—no easy task in these Taxed Enough Already (TEA) Party times.

## Channeling Outrage, Managing Heat

We cannot take all the credit for the mass numbers of people who showed up to the first public hearing in Seattle. They turned out because a critical mass of pissed-off transit riders and shocked citizens engaged their government in an unprecedented way. We just made sure they knew how to engage. What we can take credit for is harnessing this energy, creating an organizing process to exert continued pressure on the County Council, and melding our field work with aggressive political coalition building and media outreach.

Additionally, we organized 20-30 diverse coalition partners (labor, social justice, environmental, and business interests) that joined our efforts, sent action alerts, and contacted their members to get even more people engaged. We used the organically created spark surrounding the issue, our activated partners, and countless hours of phone banking to pack additional hearings and to exponentially ramp up public pressure on the Council. As a result the media was always there capturing stories that focused on the public's outcry and individual heart-wrenching stories from bus riders.

After two weeks of meetings and nightly news coverage, our efforts culminated with a media event where we delivered over 10,000 petitions in support of

saving metro. We used a 1,000-car park and ride as our backdrop, illustrating the magnitude of cars every day that would be forced onto our already congested roadways. Under the TV camera lights we delivered our petition to the Council and could feel the balance slightly shifting in our favor. But our order was still tall. With all four of the Republican County Council members telling the media and pledging in writing that they would not support the temporary fee without a vote of the people, the supermajority we needed to save metro still eluded us.

## An Impossible Victory

At the last Council meeting a week before the vote was scheduled, after several more hours of powerful testimony, one of our staff members approached the podium and asked the members: "what more do you need to hear? You've heard from Democrats and Republicans, labor and business, and from over 10,000 citizens from across the county asking you to save Metro. With only two people out of the hundreds of testimonies speaking out against the measure, what more do you need to hear to get the job done and save our buses?"

On August 12<sup>th</sup>, a month after the massive first meeting and three days before the Council vote, the County



Figure 18: Seattle students rally for Metro service.

Executive called a press conference to announce that the impossible had happened. The save metro coalition and the massive outcry of grassroots support created the space that allowed the Executive to negotiate a deal with two Council Republicans. The outcry we organized, and the media work we built around it, created a political environment where it became impossible for the Republicans from transit-supportive suburbs to ignore us. The “us” being bus riders, ATU bus drivers, other labor organizations, businesses and chambers, and thousands of transit supporters. We brought together thousands of diverse voices into one unified voice, demanding

that King County Metro be saved. Our unprecedented coalition and the thousands of regular people and riders who spoke up, did the impossible: we convinced a supermajority of the divided County Council to do the right thing and save our buses.

*Andrew Austin is the Field Director at Transportation Choices.*

Learn more about Transportation Choices at:

<http://transportationchoices.org/>

## America's Aging Transit Fleet and Manufacturing Job Creation: A Promising Coalition Strategy

**By: Brian Lombardozi**

Most of the states with large transit systems have also historically been home to factories building buses, light and heavy railcars, and the thousands of components that go into them. Making sure transit capital-budget dollars create good manufacturing jobs in America is a great way to build more support for transit.

And the opportunity is immediate: America has an estimated 27,600 transit buses, 4,000 passenger rail cars and locomotives, and 220 light rail cars that need to be replaced over the next six years. That is a terrific opportunity to bring more of this work on-shore and create thousands of good factory jobs.

That is the strategy of the Transportation Manufacturing Action Program (TMAP), a campaign launched by the Apollo Alliance (and now sustained in Apollo's merger with Blue Green Alliance).

In early 2010, the Apollo Alliance convened a task force of leading manufacturers, labor unions, and policy experts in transportation, energy, and

economic development—the TMAP task force—to study and recommend ways to expand the domestic production of advanced transit systems, vehicles, clean trucks, and their component parts. Based on its recommendations, TMAP outlined a comprehensive strategy to boost domestic transit and freight-vehicle manufacturing. The plan starts with increasing current federal investment to \$30 billion per year for public transit and \$10 billion per year for intercity and high-speed rail.

TMAP projects that bringing transit and rail investments up to these levels will create 3.7 million direct and indirect jobs, double ridership over the next two decades, and build out a comprehensive intercity and high-speed rail system. In addition, these investments will generate \$60 billion annually in gross domestic product, nearly \$45 billion in additional worker income, and \$14 billion in annual tax revenue, spurring additional growth throughout the economy. More than 600,000 jobs could be created in the manufacturing sector alone, many in the production of advanced buses, rail cars, cleaner freight movement technologies, and component parts.

However, due to decades of underinvestment, the U.S. transit manufacturing industry is weak. The supply chains for transit buses, rail

vehicles and clean trucks only support about 40,000 U.S. manufacturing jobs across all 50 states. Two studies commissioned by TMAP identified 320 key companies that could scale up to meet higher demand.

To maximize manufacturing job-creation benefits, transit investments must be accompanied by measures that strengthen domestic production capacity. Since the passage of the last federal transportation bill, over \$10 billion has gone to foreign-built transit vehicles, steel track, and supporting equipment.

In response to TMAP's analysis, the U.S. Department of Transportation has already become more vigilant about enforcing domestic content rules, working hard to find domestic suppliers and waiving the rules only as a last resort. TMAP also recommends—and the USDOT has moved—to create more product standardization in procurement contracts when federal dollars pay for transit vehicles. That means more competitive bidding and lower long-term maintenance costs.

United Streetcar, a division of Oregon Iron Works, was created to meet the revived demand for streetcars created by the growth of Portland's transit system. With a workforce represented

by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and by the Ironworkers, and with 90 percent domestic content (aiming for 100), the company has been honored as an exemplary “high road” and green employer by both the Apollo Alliance and American Rights at Work.

Inspired by TMAP, there are efforts afoot in several more places—including New York state, Los Angeles, Boston and Washington state—to capture more good jobs manufacturing transit vehicles.

*Brian Lombardo is a Senior Policy Analyst at BlueGreen Alliance.*

Find out more about T-MAP—including links to the reports that identify assembly and supply-chain companies in your state—at:

<http://apolloalliance.org/tmap/>

## Transit Rider Constituency Organizing Checklists

In laying out the strategic outreach plan for your campaign, it is critical to think big and think inclusively about the many diverse kinds of people and organizations that have a self-interest in sustaining and improving public transportation.

Based on the experiences of “boot camp” attendees and the many campaigns they described, this chapter provides a set of checklists of different kinds of constituencies that you should consider reaching out to. Of course, every community has its own unique landscape of institutions and leadership, so while these lists hopefully stimulate your thinking, you will probably think of more.

We recommend that any organizing plan include at least:

- Transit-Dependent Populations
- Pro-Transit Community-Based Organizations
- Pro-Transit Environmental, Environmental Justice, Pro-Bicycling, Public Health, and Smart Growth Organizations
- Labor Unions
- Pro-Transit Employers

## Organizing Checklist: Transit-Dependent Populations

- Disability rights organizations for the physically or mentally handicapped. One national group is ADAPT: <http://www.adapt.org/join/groups>
- Local and state senior citizens organizations, assisted living centers, and employment agencies that help seniors find employment, including:

State chapters of the **Gray Panthers**:

[http://graypanthers.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=19&Itemid=16](http://graypanthers.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=19&Itemid=16)

State chapters of **AARP**: <http://www.aarp.org/states/>

- **Student groups** at high schools, colleges and universities (not just student government bodies, but also environmental clubs, transportation or planning students, green caucuses, PTAs, etc.).

The Student Labor Action Project is a joint effort of the 400-campus United States Student Association and Jobs with Justice: <http://www.studentlabor.org/>

United Students Against Sweatshops is another network of progressive campus groups with an original focus on collegiate apparel and activism on many issues since: <http://usas.org/>

The Sierra Student Coalition is the Sierra Club's national network of more than 250 high school and college student groups: <http://ssc.sierraclub.org/> and it participates in the 600-school Campus Climate Challenge which has as part of its mission the promotion of green transportation policies:

<http://ssc.sierraclub.org/get-involved/campaigns/campus-climate-challenge/index.html>

## Organizing Checklist: Pro-Transit Community-Based Organizations

- Affiliates of the **Transportation Equity Network**, of the faith-based Gamaliel Foundation:  
[http://www.transportationequity.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=166&Itemid=78](http://www.transportationequity.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=166&Itemid=78)

- Affiliates of **Transit Riders for Public Transportation**, a network of groups sponsored by environmental justice groups:  
<http://www.thestrategycenter.org/project/transit-riders-public-transportation/members>

- Other Community-Based Organizations working in low-income areas, including but not limited to those in national networks such as:

**National People's Action** [http://www.npa-us.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=177&Itemid=177](http://www.npa-us.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=177&Itemid=177)

**USAction** <http://www.usaction.org/site/pp.asp.112.html>

**Alliance for A Just Society** <http://allianceforajustsociety.org/>

**Industrial Areas Foundation**  
<http://www.industrialareasfoundation.org/locate.html>

**PICO** <http://www.piconetwork.org/about?id=0012>

**Direct Action Research and Training (DART)**  
<http://www.thedartcenter.org/learn-about-dart/where-we-work/>

- Local affiliates of labor-community coalitions, such as:

**Partnership for Working Families**  
<http://www.communitybenefits.org/section.php?id=213>

**Jobs with Justice** <http://www.iwj.org/coalitions/index.html>



## Organizing Checklist: Pro-Transit Environmental, Environmental Justice, Pro-Bicycling, Public Health, and Smart Growth Organizations

As you can see from the more than 500 organizations and public officials who have joined Transportation for America and from the 100+ organizations that belong to the National Alliance of Public Transportation Advocates, there is a very broad consensus coming from many different self-interests that Americans need more mobility choices, especially more transit.

- Coalition members of **Transportation for America**  
<http://t4america.org/who-we-are/>  
(Look for both organizations and officials from your area)
- Regional or state affiliates of **Smart Growth America**  
<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/about/our-coalition/>
- State (or California county) chapters of the **Sierra Club**  
<http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/>
- Affiliates of the **Alliance for Biking & Walking**  
(formerly the Thunderhead Alliance)  
<http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/index.php/site/about/C407>
- The **National Alliance of Public Transportation Advocates**, a service of the American Public Transportation Association  
<http://www.publictransportation.org/NAPTA/Pages/MemberDirectory.aspx>
- The **American Public Health Association**, state chapters:  
<http://www.apha.org/memberships/states/StateRegPHA/default.htm>  
(APHA also has caucuses focusing on community-based public health, labor, and every major minority group: Black, Latino, Asian Pacific Islander, and American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian.)

See also the listing on the previous page for Transit Riders for Public Transportation, a network sponsored by environmental justice groups.

## Organizing Checklist: Labor Unions

Because labor unions are overwhelmingly urban institutions, they have lots of members who get to work via transit. This is a campaign outreach activity best initiated by the leadership of your local transit workers' union. They should call their peers at the locals of these unions in your city and ask them to let your campaign sign up union commuters. Better yet, the non-transit unions should be asked to use their mobilization structures to recruit members into your coalition! This is "low-hanging fruit" for those metro areas with substantial unionization.

- American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees or AFSCME** (city, county and other public agency workers)
- Service Employees International Union or SEIU** (public employees like those in AFSCME plus janitors, security guards, hospital workers, and nursing home aides)
- American Federation of Teachers or AFT** (public school teachers and staff, higher education workers, and diverse public employees in some states)
- National Education Association or NEA** (public school teachers and staff)
- United Food & Commercial Workers or UFCW** (grocery store and warehouse workers)
- Unite Here** (hotel, entertainment resort and casino workers)
- Communications Workers of America** (telephone workers plus diverse public employees in some states)
- Teamsters** (workers in warehousing, manufacturing, UPS, and other sectors)

Central Labor Councils (CLCs) are metro federations of local labor unions, usually including locals in most if not all of the above-listed international unions. You can identify your local CLC at: <http://www.aflcio.org/aboutus/unioncities/>. CLCs work for the local unions that are affiliated with them, so your best protocol is to approach the CLC together with the transit workers' union.

See two publications from Good Jobs First, Talking to Union Leaders About Smart Growth (<http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/talking.pdf>) and Labor Leaders As Smart Growth Advocates (<http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/clcsurvey.pdf>), for background and ideas.

## Organizing Checklist: Pro-Transit Employers

We strongly recommend that you reach out to the Human Resources directors and other officers of employers in your city who have a lot of transit-dependent employees.

To get a running start in identifying employers who have sought official help coping with commuting issues, go to your regional Council of Governments (COG) or Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and seek out their Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (or “CMAQ”) staff—if they have one. Those staff may have a list of employers they have assisted with issues such as helping employees receive their federal transit benefit (pre-tax payroll deduction for a transit pass), van pooling to and from transit stations, telecommuting, or other Traffic Demand Management (TDM) issues.

You are looking for corporate ringleaders among:

- Companies that employ and/or serve a lot of people at low wages, such as hotels, nursing homes, retail malls, temp and day-labor agencies, and local government agency offices that provide constituency services
- “Eds and meds,” that is, large urban institutions such as universities and hospitals
- Companies that pride themselves on being “green,” or which promote “local first” and can be found in many sectors of the economy, including firms in architecture, construction, law, energy, food service, food retailing and many more.

### **Business Alliance for Local Living Economies**

<http://www.livingeconomies.org/netview>

### **American Independent Business Alliance**

<http://www.amiba.net/find-iba>

### **American Sustainable Business Council**

[http://www.asbcouncil.org/Current ASBC Partners.html](http://www.asbcouncil.org/Current_ASBC_Partners.html)

### **U.S. Green Building Council**

<http://www.usgbc.org/FindaChapter/ChapList.aspx>

**Main Street Alliance**

<http://mainstreetalliance.org/>

Best Workplaces for Commuters is a national program to encourage and honor employers that promote transit use and other TDM practices. Look for companies in your area that belong to it at <http://www.bestworkplaces.org/>.

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## Online Resources: Selected Campaign Tools

In addition to the groups featured in our interviews and case studies, below we describe and provide links to the best toolkit materials for transit organizing we know of on the Web. If you have others to recommend, we'd love to hear from you!

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### Center for Transportation Excellence

**“Transit Ballot Initiatives: What Works and Why”**—Every two years, the Center for Transportation Excellence ([www.cfte.org](http://www.cfte.org)) holds a national conference where transit advocates and campaign experts review recent campaigns. See the 2009 and 2011 conference proceedings, including PowerPoints and video or audio for some sessions, at:

<http://www.cfte.org/TIC/TIC2009.asp>

<http://www.cfte.org/TIC/TIC2011.asp>

CFTE also publishes a Guide for Successful Transit Initiatives, at:

[http://www.cfte.org/Building\\_Communities.pdf](http://www.cfte.org/Building_Communities.pdf)

And a detailed summary of transit ballot initiative results across the country, at:

<http://www.cfte.org/success/pastelections.asp>

The CFTE website also has advice about winning arguments, academic research comparing different campaign outcomes, background information on transit opponents, a transit glossary and much more.

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### Amalgamated Transit Union

**“Stranded Voices: Transit Riders Speak About America's Mobility Crisis”** a collection of interviews with riders affected by service cuts and fare hikes, published by the Amalgamated Transit Union, March 2011.

[http://issuu.com/atucomm/docs/strandedvoices\\_whitepaper?mode=embed&layout=html%3A%2F%2Fskin.issuu.com%2Fv%2Fflight%2Flayout.xml&showFlipBtn=true](http://issuu.com/atucomm/docs/strandedvoices_whitepaper?mode=embed&layout=html%3A%2F%2Fskin.issuu.com%2Fv%2Fflight%2Flayout.xml&showFlipBtn=true)

**American Public Transportation Association  
National Alliance of Public Transportation Advocates**

**APTA** is the trade association of diverse pro-transit interests

[www.apta.com](http://www.apta.com)

**NAPTA** is a service provided by APTA with news of major legislative events and advocacy materials for transit activists

[www.publictransportation.org](http://www.publictransportation.org)

[www.publictransportation.org/napta/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.publictransportation.org/napta/Pages/default.aspx)

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**Smart Growth America**

**“Transit Campaign Planning: A strategy template for organizers”**

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/transit-campaign-planning.pdf>

**“Transit Funding Mechanisms: A Primer”**

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/2010/01/01/transit-funding-mechanisms-a-primer/>

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**Center for Transit-Oriented Development  
(Joint effort of Reconnecting America, Center for Neighborhood Technology,  
and Strategic Economics)**

**TOD Database**

<http://toddata.cnt.org/>

Interactive web toolkit with extensive data for all neighborhoods surrounding every fixed-guideway transit route in the U.S.: **3776 existing stations** and **833 proposed stations** in **47 metropolitan areas**. A great way to quickly size up and prioritize communities for targeting in a campaign.

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## Alliance for Justice

**Common Interests: How Unions and 501(c)(3) Organizations Can Maximize Their Power To Make Policy Change** is a good primer that details what unions and non-profits may and may not do in advocacy.

<http://www.afj.org/assets/resources/nap/how-unions-and-501-c-3-organizations-can-maximize-their-power-to-make-policy-change.pdf>

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## Good Jobs First

***Talking to Union Leaders About Smart Growth***—a primer on how sprawl harms union members in diverse industries, plus suggested ways to most effectively approach union leaders to recruit them into anti-sprawl/pro-transit campaigns.

<http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/talking.pdf>

***Union Leaders as Smart Growth Advocates: How Union Leaders See Suburban Sprawl and Work for Smart Growth Solutions***—A survey of metro labor federation leaders reveals that unions have for decades advocated for policies now called smart growth, including better funding for transit. A quick primer before you approach a Central Labor Council or State Labor Federation.

<http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/clcsurvey.pdf>

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## Transportation Alternatives

**Transit Rider Bill of Rights:** Transportation Alternatives/Rider Rebellion's New York City demands

<http://riderrebellion.org/billofrights/readyourrights>



## Transit Rider Organizing Groups: A Directory with Links

### ALABAMA

Citizens for Transit/Greater Birmingham Ministries

<http://www.gbm.org/whatwedo/systemschange/transit/>

### ARIZONA

Arizona Transit Association (Statewide)

<http://www.azta.org/>

Friends of Transit (Phoenix)

<http://www.friendsoftransit.org/>

### CALIFORNIA

ACCE Riders for Transit Justice (Oakland)

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/ACCE-Riders-For-Transit-Justice/156692301020387?sk=wall>

Bus Riders Union (Los Angeles)

<http://www.thestrategycenter.org/project/bus-riders-union>

Green Wheels (Northwestern CA)

<http://www.green-wheels.org/>

Move San Diego

<http://www.movesandiego.org/>

Rescue Muni (San Francisco)

<http://www.rescuemuni.org/>

San Francisco Transit Riders Union

<http://www.sftru.org/>

<http://www.facebook.com/SFTRU>

Southern California Transit Advocates

<http://www.socata.net/>

The Transit Coalition (Los Angeles)

<https://www.thetransitcoalition.us/nationaltc/>

TransForm (Statewide)

<http://www.transformca.org/>

Transit Riders OC (Orange County)

<http://www.transitridercoc.com/>

## **COLORADO**

Transit Alliance

<http://www.transitalliance.org/>

## **CONNECTICUT**

Tri-State Transportation Campaign (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut metro)

<http://www.tstc.org/>

## **WASHINGTON, DC**

Sierra Club Sustainable Metro DC Campaign

<http://www.sierraclub.org/dc/sprawl/>

## **FLORIDA**

Central Florida Jobs with Justice (Orlando)

<http://www.jwjoblog.org/tag/orlando/>

Citizens for Improved Transit (West Palm Beach)

<http://citizens4transit.org/>

Florida Consumer Action Network/Riders United (Tampa Bay)

<http://www.fcan.org/>

People's Transit Movement (part of Central Florida JwJ)

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Peoples-Transit-Movement/194485290588128>

## GEORGIA

Atlanta Public Sector Alliance/Transit Riders Union

<http://atlantapublicsectoralliance.org/>

Citizens for Progressive Transit (Atlanta)

<http://www.cfpt.org/>

## ILLINOIS

Active Transportation Alliance (Chicago)

<http://www.activetrans.org/>

Citizens Taking Action for Transit Dependent Riders (Chicago)

<http://www.ctariders.org/>

Little Village Environmental Justice Organization/Chicago Public Transit

<http://chicagopublictransit.org/>

Pilsen Neighbors Community Council (Chicago)

<http://pilsenneighbors.org/our-work/transportation/?lang=en>

## INDIANA

Coalition for the Advancement of Regional Transportation (southern Indiana)

<http://cartky.org/>

<http://cartky.org/taxonomy/term/46+18+17>

Indiana Citizen's Alliance for Transit (Statewide)

<http://www.indianacat.org>

<http://www.facebook.com/icat4transit>

## KENTUCKY

Coalition for the Advancement of Regional Transportation (Statewide)

<http://cartky.org/>

<http://cartky.org/taxonomy/term/46+18+17>

## LOUISIANA

Potential Proximities (Baton Rouge)

<http://potentialproximities.wordpress.com/>

## MARYLAND

Central Maryland Transportation Alliance

<http://www.cmtalliance.org/>

Action Committee for Transit (Montgomery County)

<http://www.actfortransit.org>

PRISCM (Prince Georges County)

<http://www.priscm.org/>

## MASSACHUSETTS

Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts (Statewide)

<http://www.n2nma.org/>

Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership

<http://www.somervillestep.org/>

T-Riders Union (Statewide)

<http://www.ace-ej.org/tru>

## MICHIGAN

Metropolitan Organizing Strategy Enabling Strength – MOSES (Detroit)

<http://www.mosesmi.org/transportation.html>

Transportation Riders United (Detroit)

<http://www.detroittransit.org/>

Interfaith Strategy for Advocacy & Action in the Community – ISAAC (Kalamazoo)

<http://www.isaackalamazoo.org/>

## MINNESOTA

Transit for Livable Communities (Statewide)

<http://www.tlcmnnesota.org/index.php>

ISAIAH (Minneapolis, St. Paul and St. Cloud)

<http://www.isaiah-mn.org/>

## MISSOURI

Metropolitan Congregations United (St. Louis metro)

<http://mcutl.com/>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Metropolitan-Congregations-United/332152582118?sk=info>

## NEW JERSEY

Tri-State Transportation Campaign (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut metro)

<http://www.tstc.org/>

## NEW YORK

Citizens for Regional Transit (Buffalo)

[www.citizenstransit.org](http://www.citizenstransit.org)

New York State Transportation Equity Alliance (Statewide)

<http://nystea.net/>

NYPIRG's Straphangers Campaign (New York City)

<http://www.straphangers.org/>

Transit Rider Action Committee (TRAC – part of WEACTION) (New York City)

<http://www.facebook.com/TRAC.WEACTION>

Transportation Alternatives Rider Rebellion (New York City)

<http://riderrebellion.org/>

<http://www.transalt.org/takeaction/actioncenter/4839>

Tri-State Transportation Campaign (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut metro)

<http://www.tstc.org/>

United Puerto Rican Organization of Sunset Park – UPROSE (Brooklyn)

<http://uprose.org/>

WE ACT for Environmental Justice

<http://www.weact.org/Projects/AffordableEquitableTransit/tabid/603/Default.aspx>

## OHIO

Cincy Streetcar

<http://cincystreetcar.wordpress.com/>

Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential (Northeast Ohio)

[www.leapinfo.org](http://www.leapinfo.org)

## OREGON

Transit Rider's Union: TriMet riders concerned about transit cuts (Portland)

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=137744510452>

## PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network

<http://piin.org/piin-issues/transportation-equity/>

## TENNESSEE

TransitNow Nashville

<http://transitnownashville.org/>

## TEXAS

Alliance for Public Transportation (Austin)

<http://allianceforpublictransportation.org/>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Alliance-For-Public-Transportation/93927129210?ref=ts>

Citizens' Transportation Coalition (Houston)

<http://www.ctchouston.org/>

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=66030972533>

## **VIRGINIA**

Empower Hampton Roads

<http://empowerhr.org/>

Richmond Transit Riders Union

<http://www.iww.org/en/node/5114>

## **WASHINGTON**

Spokane Alliance

<http://iafnw.org/spokanealliance>

Transportation Choices Coalition (Statewide)

<http://www.transportationchoices.org/>

## **WISCONSIN**

Madison Area Bus Advocates

<http://www.busadvocates.org/>

Milwaukee Transit Riders Union

<http://www.transitridersunion.org>





<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Milwaukee-Transit-Riders-Union/26389311476>

WISDOM (Statewide)

<http://www.wisdomwi.org/>

# TRANSIT IS WONDERFUL

**In tough times, it's time to invest in transit.**  
 If we make our subways, buses and commuter lines better, we are creating jobs and investing in our economy, environment and our future.  
 Let's keep New York Moving!  
[KeepNewYorkMoving.org](http://KeepNewYorkMoving.org)

Good Jobs First  
[www.goodjobsfirst.org](http://www.goodjobsfirst.org)  
 (202) 232-1616

