

# Advocacy For Transit

MN/WI Public Transportation Conference  
October 15-17, 2018



# Transit In Minnesota - A Tale of Two Regions

- Transit in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area:
  - Huge System that covers most of the 7 county area
  - Includes LRT, BRT, Express Bus, Regular Route, Metro Mobility
  - Provides millions of rides each year



# Metropolitan Area Transit

- In 2017, Metro Transit provided 81.9 million rides on 130 bus routes—including the new A Line rapid bus service—and the METRO Blue and Green Lines (light rail transit, or LRT), and Northstar, a commuter rail line.
- Suburban Systems serve communities with mainly commuter service.

# Greater Minnesota Transit

- Many people don't realize how much transit service exists.
- Misperceptions about who can use smaller systems
- Hard to mobilize support



# Political Challenges

- People equate transit with Metro Area - Greater MN Transit is often overlooked.
- Politicians use LRT as a political weapon and that translates into less support for transit overall.
- Advocates have been focusing more on Bus Service

# Cultivate Political Champions and Allies

- Even a few elected officials in the right position can make a huge difference
- Meet with local officials as well as state and federal
- Community leaders can be important champions



# Cultivate Political Champions and Allies

- Local Chambers of Commerce, local businesses that understand the importance of transit
- Other organizations involved in transportation
- Other organizations that serve your clients

# Have a Clear and Specific Ask

- Get down to routes, hours, buses in specific communities
- How much funding do you need?
- What revenue sources make sense?



# Stories - Of Course!

- Find compelling stories and capture them - photo and text, interview, incorporate in testimony.
- Get the stories out to: local news media, local legislators and officials, potential riders and advocates

- “I greet every passenger. I know most of them by name. I make them feel welcome. They appreciate consistency. Many of my senior riders still have their own cars but they like the bus better. With the bus they don’t have to find a parking spot. They can look around without having to be concerned about driving. Recently I was about to drop off a couple of my riders at their stops and they told me they just weren’t ready to get off the bus yet. It’s a really good service. It helps a lot of people.”







Brett Ostby sees members of his Greater Minnesota community struggling with limited transportation options—and he knows something has to change. “I have little trouble traversing Rochester by bike, but I’m a healthy, able bodied man. I can choose to bike or drive. My fellow citizens are not all so lucky.

Infrastructure barriers and poor public transit options limit their freedom, ability to stay healthy with regular exercise, and build wealth. Public transit is limited in

Rochester so people can’t use it in most parts of the city or later at night. Those late night and early morning shifts are critical for people who work at Rochester’s well-known clinic and other employers. Bike and pedestrian networks are incomplete, lacking in connectivity and safety infrastructure. More funding for public transit, biking, and pedestrian infrastructure is needed to allow all Minnesotans to thrive.”







# Technology Can Help

- Social Media - let's you get your message out beyond riders to anyone interested with a small budget
- New ways to mobilize people like Phone2Action: text "transportation" to 52886
- Ask supporters to "like" and follow legislators

# Coalition Action

- Rallies and Events with allies can get attention
- Reach out to groups that may seem non-traditional
- Share expenses for things like paid advertising
- Share lobbying work
- Present a United Front



# Develop a Relationship - Stay in Touch

- Get to know 'em before you need 'em
- Stay in touch with elected officials: visits, emails, calls, letters
- Education is not the same as lobbying
- Thank them when good things happen
- Give them opportunities to look good.

- [www.mpta-transit.org](http://www.mpta-transit.org)

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