



Trick Out My Trip



TEN RIDER-LED TRANSIT PROJECTS TO RETHINK HOW WE RIDE

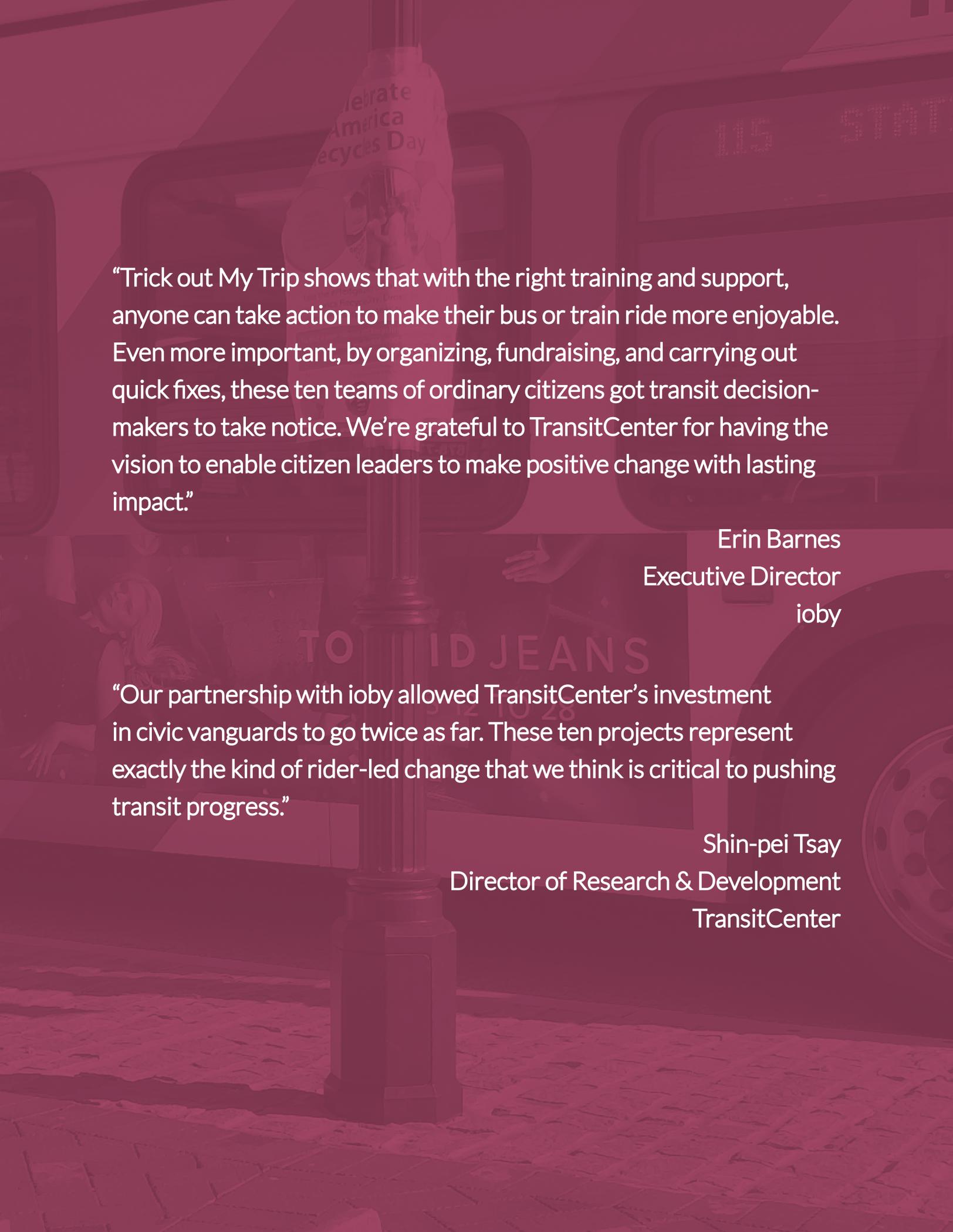
A citizen-led initiative
to improve public transit
in partnership with ioby
and TransitCenter





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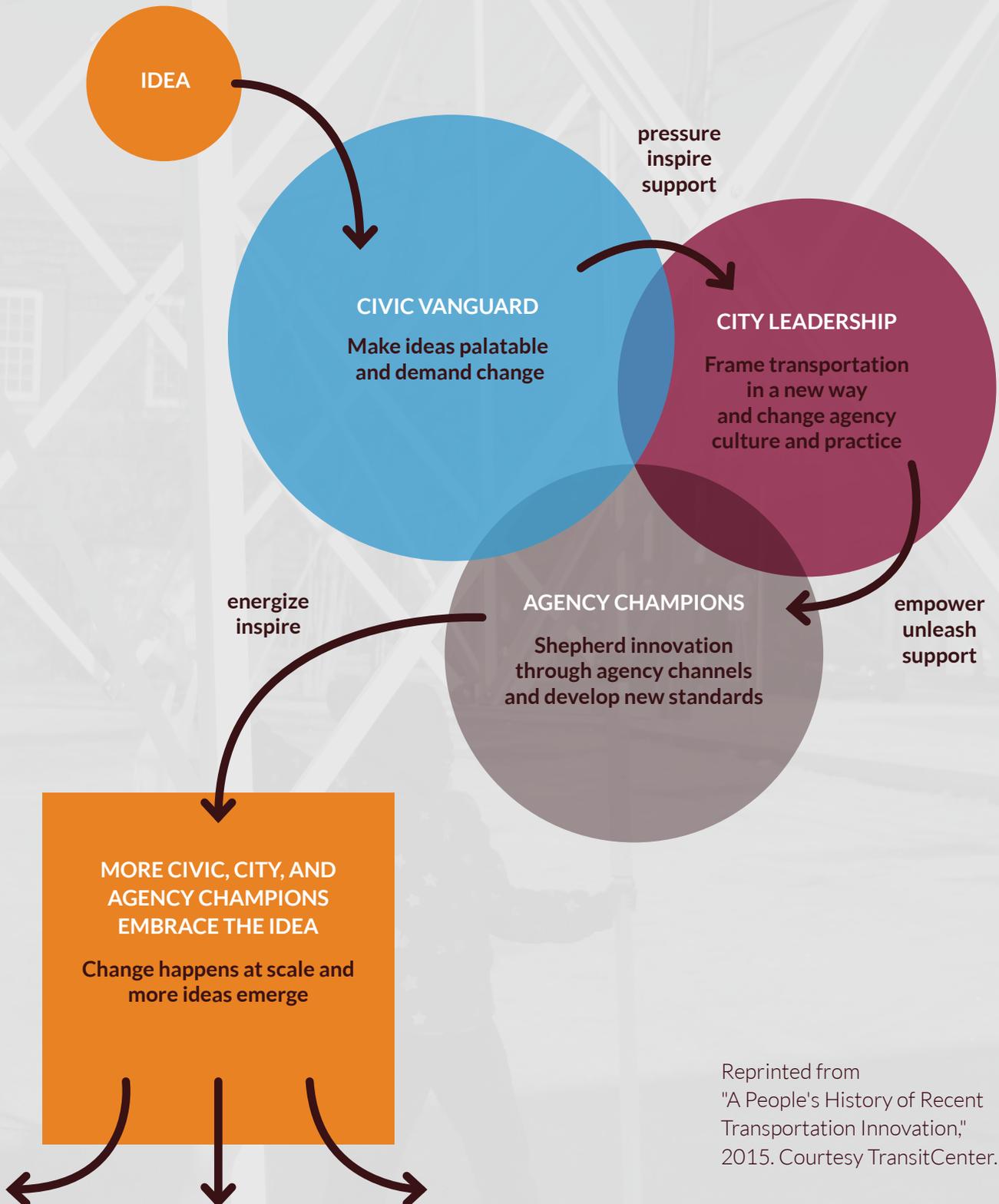
“Trick out My Trip shows that with the right training and support, anyone can take action to make their bus or train ride more enjoyable. Even more important, by organizing, fundraising, and carrying out quick fixes, these ten teams of ordinary citizens got transit decision-makers to take notice. We’re grateful to TransitCenter for having the vision to enable citizen leaders to make positive change with lasting impact.”

Erin Barnes
Executive Director
ioby

“Our partnership with ioby allowed TransitCenter’s investment in civic vanguards to go twice as far. These ten projects represent exactly the kind of rider-led change that we think is critical to pushing transit progress.”

Shin-pei Tsay
Director of Research & Development
TransitCenter

The Cycle of Change



Reprinted from
"A People's History of Recent
Transportation Innovation,"
2015. Courtesy TransitCenter.

Building Community-Led Change, Shifting the Culture of Transit Agencies

ioby and TransitCenter believe civic innovation begins with an investment in resident leadership.

The improvements, relationships, and knowledge-building of Trick Out My Trip support the “civic vanguard” model of innovation, in which citizen leaders pressure and inspire the leadership in city government or the transit agency. The leadership then, in the short term, adopts citizen-generated ideas, and in the longer term, alters their decision-making framework to permit and support these kinds of citizen-led projects.

In this model, a civic vanguard—or neighborhood leader—brings forth ideas for improving transit, makes them palatable to city leadership, and demands a change. By raising money for transit improvement projects from their neighbors and demonstrating solutions that they would ultimately like to see replicated across the transit system, the Trick Out My Trip leaders have filled the role of civic vanguards. These ten resident-led projects are at once a proof of concept and, because they are citizen-funded, strong evidence of the community’s demand for action on the part of their transit agencies.

Nowhere was this process more clearly demonstrated than in the case of TimelyTrip, where the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) was so inspired by the idea that the agency’s top leadership decided to invest in replicating the project across the city. By helping to bring about systemic change at the top tier, this project had a profound impact on agency culture. In the case of the project on Brooklyn’s 4th Avenue, leader Grace Freedman’s success hinged on the buy-in from top city officials, who agreed that the

Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) needed to be more transparent and quicker to make change. Grace considers that the MTA heeded to pressure from the community and city leaders by initiating a public conversation: evidence that the culture of the transit agency is starting to shift.

By helping to bring about systemic change at the top tier, these projects had a profound impact on transit agency culture.

The civic vanguard model holds that this change in culture at the leadership level eventually produces individual leaders within the transit agency—“agency champions”—who take these new priorities seriously and push every level of the agency toward change. These champions develop new permitting standards, improve community engagement processes, and change internal procedures in order to quickly and effectively respond to communities’ demands. They also play a role in facilitating and, often, expediting implementation of resident-led projects. Every Trick Out My Trip project was successful, in large part because of these individual champions within transit and city agencies.

TransitCenter and ioby believe that these individual champions are capable of inspiring agencies across the country to embrace the idea of resident-led change. Partnerships like the one between ioby and TransitCenter for the Trick Out My Trip campaign offer a glimpse at what is possible when residents tap into the collective power of their communities and take action to improve their transit experiences.

Trick Out My Trip Projects at a Glance

● **SOUND READER FREE LIBRARIES (Seattle, WA)**
Kristina Krause

Free libraries at bus stops across the city, offering books that riders can take with them on their journey or read while they are waiting at the stop.

Total Raised: \$4,975

● **WALK THIS WAY, LA (Los Angeles, CA)**
LA Walks

A signage system for walkers that gives travel times to transit hubs and local landmarks, shows the distance between neighborhoods, and changes the perception that Los Angeles is impossible to navigate on foot.

Total Raised: \$8,155

● **GREAT PATHS: THE BOULEVARD AT JEFFERSON PARK (Denver, CO)**
WalkDenver

Interactive community mapping exercises, design and installation of low-cost wayfinding signs, public art, and intersection enhancements, and walking tours and events to promote walking and transit.

Total Raised: \$8,828

● **PLAY DENVER (Denver, CO)**
PLAY Denver

Safe, stationary opportunities for children to play while they are waiting for the bus with their parents.

Total Raised: \$5,476

All projects on the map are either successfully completed or currently underway.

**LOUISVILLE
TRANSPORSTATION**
(Louisville, KY)

Shelby Park Neighborhood Association, SoBro Louisville Neighborhood Group, Bicycling for Louisville, Metro's Office of Sustainability, and Lockett & Farley Architects

Benches for people to sit down at bus stops, maps that highlight neighborhood assets and the city's urban bicycle network, and design features that reflect the unique identity of Shelby Park and SoBro.

Total Raised: \$8,155

**FIX THIS PUBLIC SPACE!
4TH AVE/9TH ST TRANSIT HUB**
(Brooklyn, NY)

Forth on Fourth Avenue

A pop-up event to reignite the neighborhood's imagination about rider amenities and street-level improvements at the 4th Avenue/9th Street MTA Subway station.

Total Raised: \$3,226

BUS STOP LOVE (Memphis, TN)
Community LIFT

A bus shelter that celebrates the musical and performing arts legacy in the Soulsville neighborhood of Memphis.

Total Raised: \$8,155

TIMELYTRIP (Atlanta, GA)
Binh Dam

Printed timetables at select bus stops to make bus destinations more visible and attractive.

Total Raised: \$534

MARTA BIKES (Atlanta, GA)
Atlanta Bicycle Coalition and MARTA

Self-service bicycle maintenance kiosks at high-density MARTA transit stops.

Total Raised: \$4,542

**LITHONIA RIDE TO THE
FUTURE (Lithonia, GA)**
Marie Singleton

A shelter, bench, and trash can at one bus stop in downtown Lithonia. One part of a series of tactical urbanism efforts that aim at revamping the look and renewing the spirit of Lithonia.

Total Raised: \$1,550

The Challenge

For many Americans, public transit provides a critical link between home, work, school, family, and recreation. Transit makes a tremendous contribution to the health of our cities, reducing congestion by keeping cars off the road and helping to keep the air cleaner. And taking a bus or train can also benefit riders personally, inserting short walks into our days for a healthier lifestyle, and connecting us socially to our fellow passengers.

Unfortunately, few transit riders look forward to their daily commute. While transit ridership is now at its highest in 60 years, investment in transit management and service is stagnating. And it shows. Across the country, our bus routes

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often look exactly as they did 60 years ago, even though the patterns of where we live, work, shop, and recreate have long since shifted. Long waits, delays, and unpredictable service is a normal experience for many riders. And people who rely on transit the most—those with disabilities, seniors, and families on a tight budget—often bear the brunt of service inadequacies.



The Good News

While capital improvements to transit infrastructure come with daunting price tags, it doesn't have to take a lot of money to improve the rider's experience. Studies have shown that small-scale transit improvement projects can meaningfully impact rider satisfaction. Researchers at the University of Minnesota have found, for example, that basic amenities at bus stops—shelters, benches, clear and accurate schedules—make wait times feel significantly shorter.*

ioby and TransitCenter launched the Trick Out My Trip campaign to equip citizens with the tools to make these small but crucial changes to the transit rider's experience. These ten citizen leaders share our belief that riders—who take transit every day, know the routes and how they fit within the system—can improve their ride quickly and cheaply, outside the lengthy processes of capital planning and construction.

Some of these leaders installed bike maintenance kiosks, brought playground equipment to bus stops, built and activated bus shelters that reflected neighborhood character, and designed a new pedestrian wayfinding system to help riders navigate. Others transformed their transit hubs into libraries, posted timetables at bus stops, and staged pop-up demonstrations to help residents imagine a brighter future for their dark and drab subway stop.

* American Public Transportation Association 2015:
http://www.apta.com/mediacenter/pressreleases/2015/Pages/150309_Ridership.aspx

Key Insights

Overall, ten groups raised a total of \$53,596 for their projects, including \$26,152 in matching funds. And in less than 12 months, all of the projects were implemented.

While these projects varied significantly in scope, from little free libraries to bus shelters and from bus schedules to neighborhood-scale wayfinding systems, the underlying challenges that they sought to address were similar.

From the beginning, TransitCenter and ioby hoped that these projects would result in improved relationships between communities and their local governments and transit agencies. All of the leaders reported that either a partner in city government or the local transit agency was involved in the implementation of the project in some way.

For the first time in many of these cities, changes in the transit experience started with the actions of riders.

Even in cities where relationships between transit agencies and their riders have historically been strained, transit decision-makers were generally receptive to the Trick Out My Trip projects. Each of the project leaders showed community support for new amenities, and—as in the case of TimelyTrip and Fix This Public Space—caused a shift in transit agency decision-making. For the first time in many of these cities, changes in the transit experience started with the actions of riders.



Project Goals

While they varied in scope and structure, many projects shared the goals of making transit more inclusive, friendlier and more accessible. Of the ten projects:

- 3 promoted alternatives to the automobile
- 3 made the transit experience more comfortable
- 3 facilitated mode shifts (between walking and transit, and between biking and transit)
- 10 made the transit experience more appealing to non-riders, so that ridership would improve

Working With transit agencies

For the most part, city governments and local transit agencies supported the leaders' efforts. Of the ten leaders:

- 2 reported that local authorities gave express permission to use a space, and/or helped secure permission from other stakeholders
- 7 received guidance or technical assistance from the transit agency or city government
- 2 worked with governments or transit agencies as full implementation partners, charged with some or all of the project's construction
- 1 reported that the government or transit agency was initially opposed to the idea, and then changed positions after receiving a strong showing of community support for the project

Knowledge Building

In addition to building relationships with transit officials, participation in Trick Out My Trip bolstered the capacities of these engaged riders to fundraise and organize. Of the ten project leaders:

- 7 came to ioby with no previous online fundraising experience
- 5 came to ioby with no previous community organizing experience
- 10 attributed their fundraising success to ioby's tools, trainings, and one-on-one support

New Donors

New donor acquisition is one way in which ioby measures the value of a crowd-resourcing campaign to a new team or organization's development. To a first-time fundraiser on ioby, the campaign can be crucial in building a list of supporters. That is, a successful leader is able to cultivate donors from outside of their network and call on them for a future campaign. Of the ten leaders:

- 2 said that they knew every donor to their campaigns personally
- 2 reported knowing between 76% and 99% of their donors personally
- 1 reported knowing between 51% and 75% of the donors to her campaign personally
- 2 reported knowing between 25 and 50% of their donors personally
- 2 reported knowing less than 25% of the donors to their campaign personally



CASE STUDY

Fix This Public Space!

4th Ave/9th St Transit Hub (Brooklyn, NY)

Leader: Grace Freedman

Number of donations: 41

Total raised, including matching funds: \$3,226

Average donation: \$39

ioby Leader Grace Freedman’s group, Forth on Fourth Ave (FOFA), is a committee of the Park Slope Civic Council. The group is dedicated to making Brooklyn’s 4th Avenue—a heavily industrial corridor pocked by empty warehouses and defunct garages—safer, cleaner, greener and more livable. In 2014, the team set its sights on 4th Avenue’s heavily used but dark and decidedly unappealing transit hub at 9th street.

The transit hub had been an important community concern for many years, raised in Park Slope Civic Council meetings and a community survey that FOFA collected in Winter 2014. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) had been running far behind schedule on a station renovation, and the community had experienced trouble reaching the agency for information.

To the team, the Trick Out My Trip opportunity seemed like a good chance to raise awareness, spur community involvement and capture community energy around the issue. Specifically, FOFA wanted the MTA to engage with the community in a public meeting, to discuss the renovation timetable, especially the plans to install public art and lease storefront space at the hub for retail.

To help neighbors envision the improvements that could be made to the station, the team used the money that they raised on ioby’s platform to stage a “pop-up” event at the station. They made life-sized artistic renderings of storefronts on canvas, and used cardboard and temporary props that were designed to engage passersby.

In the end, the team received press coverage and visits from several elected officials. The resulting attention influenced the MTA to revisit work at the transit hub, and the relationship between the transit agency and the community was ultimately strengthened. The MTA met publicly with the Park Slope Civic Council, and answered questions in full detail. The MTA also did a joint walk-through with the New York City Department of Transportation,



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City Councilman Brad Lander’s office, and select community representatives, including FOFA members.

The MTA responded to several of the requests, including new lighting and signage, a new stair tread to address concerns from riders with disabilities, and temporary art in empty storefronts. The art installation was installed in fall 2015, and the storefront retail is slated to open in 2016.



CASE STUDY

Great Paths: The Boulevard at Jefferson Park (Denver, CO)

Leader: Jill Locantore

Number of donations: 52

**Total raised, including
matching funds: \$8,828**

Average donation: \$75

Like many neighborhoods, northwest Denver is changing rapidly. With new restaurants and businesses opening their doors, there are more places to visit and more people moving in to enjoy these amenities.

Still, transportation to and from the neighborhood can be tricky. The closest light rail station is not far from the business district, but crossing the “cloverleaf” at Colfax Avenue and Federal Boulevard is uncomfortable for pedestrians. At the same time, residents who take the bus have to cross a dangerous intersection to access the stops. Residents who would like to walk face barriers such as busy streets and poor sidewalk conditions.

In 2014, Jill Locantore and her team at WalkDenver were looking to build on the successes of Better Block Jefferson Park, a collection of tactical urbanism projects that focused on creating walkable destinations in Northwest Denver. After brainstorming ideas to build on their momentum, the group settled on the Great Paths project to focus on bringing people to those destinations by foot.

A key component of the new project was the installation of approximately 50 pedestrian wayfinding signs throughout the neighborhood on

existing poles. The project also included two pieces of public art: a street mural and a sculpture, both of which have now been installed.

WalkDenver’s public art projects are aimed at slowing down the traffic and improving the walking experience. Jill told ioby that “the area is densifying, making driving more difficult. Public art and wayfinding signs enhance the experience for transit users.”

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The project has been embraced by community members. The team at WalkDenver reports hearing that pedestrians and business owners appreciate the wayfinding signs, as many are from outside the neighborhood and have trouble orienting themselves. Said Jill, “We are very happy with the number of residents and businesses who supported the project by donating through ioby and by volunteering to implement the project, and with the final outcomes.”



Take The Bus To...
Midtown Station
 Minutes 26 or 93 (MARTA)

| Weekdays | Saturday | Sunday/Holiday |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| AM 5:30 :45 | AM 6:00 :15 | AM 6:52 :65 |
| 6:05 :20 | 6:30 :45 | 7:42 :55 |
| 7:05 :18 | 7:05 :30 | 8:32 :45 |
| 8:06 :21 | 8:05 :35 | 9:22 :37 |
| 9:05 :29 | 9:05 :35 | 10:00 :11 |
| 10:29 :59 | 10:05 :35 | 10:50 :37 |
| 11:29 :57 | 11:05 :35 | 11:50 :37 |
| PM 12:30 | PM 12:40 | PM 12:40 |
| 1:00 :15 | 1:10 :25 | 1:00 :15 |
| 2:00 :15 | 2:10 :25 | 2:00 :15 |
| 3:00 :15 | 3:10 :25 | 3:00 :15 |
| 4:00 :15 | 4:10 :25 | 4:00 :15 |
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| 11:00 :15 | 11:10 :25 | 11:00 :15 |
| 12:00 :15 | 12:10 :25 | 12:00 :15 |

Effective: Friday, 9/19/14 at 00 PM to Monday, 9/21/14 at 00 AM (midnight)

SCAN HERE FOR REAL-TIME ARRIVALS

LINDBERGH DR @ CHESHIRE BRIDGE RD

Buses departing from this stop.

| 6 → Emory → Little Five Points → Inman Park Effective 8/23/2014 | 27 → Cheshire Bridge → Ansley Mall → Midtown Effective 12/14/2013 | 30 → LaVista → Toco Hills → North Lake Effective 5/17/2014 | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|----------|----------|
| Weekdays | Saturday | Sunday | Weekdays | Saturday | Sunday | Weekdays | Saturday | Sunday |
| AM 5:33 :48 | AM 6:04 :49 | AM 6:04 :49 | AM 5:34 :54 | AM 6:05 :45 | AM 6:05 :45 | AM 6:15 :45 | AM 6:35 | AM 7:25 |
| 6:05 :20 :35 :50 | 7:34 | 7:34 | 6:14 :34 :54 | 7:25 | 7:25 | 7:15 :45 | 7:25 | 8:15 |
| 7:05 :18 :36 :51 | 8:19 | 8:19 | 7:14 :34 :54 | 8:05 :45 | 8:05 :45 | 8:15 :45 | 8:15 | 9:06 :56 |
| 8:06 :21 :36 :54 | 9:06 :51 | 9:06 :51 | 8:14 :40 | 9:25 | 9:25 | 9:21 | 9:06 :56 | 10:46 |
| 9:05 :29 :59 | 10:36 | 10:36 | 9:06 :31 :56 | 10:06 :46 | 10:06 :46 | 10:11 | 10:46 | 11:36 |
| 10:29 :59 | 11:21 | 11:21 | 10:21 :46 | 11:26 | 11:26 | 11:01 :51 | 11:36 | PM 12:27 |
| 11:29 :57 | PM 12:07 :52 | PM 12:07 :52 | 11:11 :36 | PM 12:06 :46 | PM 12:06 :46 | PM 12:41 | PM 12:27 | 1:17 |
| PM 12:30 | 1:37 | 1:37 | PM 12:01 :26 :51 | 1:26 | 1:26 | 1:31 | 1:17 | 2:07 :57 |

CASE STUDY

TimelyTrip (Atlanta, GA)

Leader: Binh Dam **Number of donations: 12**

Total raised, including matching funds: \$534 **Average donation: \$22**

Data provided by MARTA. TimelyTrip is not affiliated with them. TimelyTrip may change without notice, and may vary with road conditions and other events and holidays.

Thanks to these organizations and individuals for making this project possible. (TimelyTrip is not affiliated with them.)



SCAN HERE to get live bus predictions on your mobile device.

Live predictions provided by OneBusAway.

MARTA buses have long suffered from bad community perception. Binh Dam, the leader behind TimelyTrip, told ioby that, in Atlanta, “without careful timing, completing a trip on buses is painful and takes a significant amount of time.”

Said Binh, “The first step to making buses easier to use is to provide printed route and schedule information at stops.”

Having moved from Paris, where arrival times are listed electronically on big screens, Binh was disappointed by the lack of schedule information at Atlanta bus stops, most of which feature nothing more than a pole and a sign that reads “MARTA.” So he decided to spearhead improvements himself, and create a scan code for users with smart phones. The concept couldn’t be simpler – just scan the image with your phone, and up pops an accurate timetable.

By the end of fall 2015, 15 bus stops in Midtown and downtown Atlanta should be outfitted with both hard copy schedules and scan code stations.

Binh told ioby that Atlanta residents are showing more and more interest in improving—and using!—their beleaguered public transit system. “I think the conditions are more favorable for transit to improve,” he said. Factors like “public opinion, demographics, people moving more to the inner

Underpinning this project is Binh’s belief that the belief that the clarity provided by the new schedules and scan codes will not only make life easier for current riders, but also draw in potential new riders.

city, and of course issues with traffic” have been motivating MARTA and the community to improve the experience of riding the bus.

Underpinning this project is Binh’s belief that the clarity provided by the new schedules and scan codes will not only make life easier for current riders, but also draw in potential new riders.

Binh’s Trick Out My Trip campaign earned the attention of some key decision-makers at MARTA. “They know me more as a thought leader,” Binh told ioby. Following his innovative project’s success, Binh is now speaking with MARTA about helping the agency develop new, participatory engagement strategies. Soon, more forward-thinking and creative residents like Binh may have an opportunity to impact the future of their transit system.

Quick Wins

The ten citizen leaders behind the Trick Out My Trip projects each reached out to dozens of neighbors and fellow transit riders and engaged them as donors, volunteers, teammates, and ambassadors. Together, they planned, funded, built, and carried out projects that made their commutes more reliable and more enjoyable. By design, each of these projects had a quick implementation of only a few months and was done in full cooperation with the local transit agency.

Without a long and contentious planning process, riders made opportunities to play, read, and enjoy art at their bus stops. They introduced the conveniences of bike repair stations and easy-to-read wayfinding signage. The speed and ease with which these projects were completed demonstrated to communities that meaningful improvements could be made in the short term.

Lasting Impact

These seemingly small projects had profound impacts on their transit systems and their communities alike, far beyond the immediately noticeable improvements to riders' experiences.

Most citizen leaders involved in the Trick Out My Trip campaign reported improved communication and understanding between their communities and their transit agencies, and that they felt that their agencies valued their contributions. And they reported increased knowledge in how to fundraise, plan, and cooperate with agencies to implement transit projects. These lasting systemic effects begin to build a foundation for a more meaningful, more effective relationship between citizens and local decisionmakers.

Of course, small-scale projects are no substitute for much-needed service improvements and long-term capital investments. But by partnering with their constituents on smaller-scale, quickly implemented projects, transit agencies are demonstrating respect for the stake that riders have in the future of their transit systems.

As rider-led, rider-funded projects begin to emerge, communities benefit from an improved transit experience, citizen leaders are emboldened and equipped to work with their transit agencies, and agencies undergo a cultural shift toward more meaningful and effective community participation.



For Communities:

A better transit experience

For Citizen Leaders:

Increased capacity to work with transit agencies, fundraise, and organize

For Transit Agencies:

A cultural shift toward more meaningful, more effective community participation

