

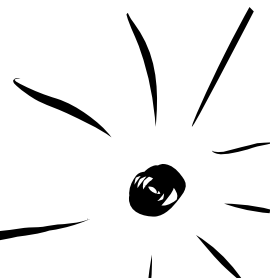
ioby Active Transit Toolkit



Lessons from our community on how to make our streets safer, our transportation more equitable, & our neighborhoods more joyful!



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Active Transit content,
including videos, go to
ioby.org/transit



About the Leaders & Their Projects



Images Courtesy
Providence Streets Coalition

LIZA BURKIN Providence, Rhode Island



Liza Burkin has seen the streets of Providence from every angle: organizer, policy analyst, and pedicab driver. This final title is what sparked her passion for transportation justice. “I was taking people around Newport, a summer touristy town, in a giant tricycle and seeing how incredibly congested it was, and wondering how we can make a city where people can get around in ways other than cars.” This ultimately led her to found the Providence Streets Coalition, an organization that increases access to healthy, safe transportation for all Providence residents.

As Providence Streets Coalition’s founder and lead organizer, Liza has spent years connecting the dots between government officials, business leaders, and residents. Through this work, PSC has successfully advocated for miles of urban traffic calming initiatives, from safer bike lanes to increased signage for pedestrians. She is at the forefront of ensuring Providence is a world-class city when it comes to transportation—which means all residents have the resources they need to get around.

THE PROVIDENCE STREETS COALITION

is an alliance of community organizations, local businesses, schools, and neighborhood associations that care about safe, sustainable, and equitable streets.

Since its founding in 2019, the coalition has grown into more than 70 organizations that span Providence’s businesses, students, neighborhood leaders, residents, and elected officials. Together, they have championed the creation of more than 35 miles of urban trails and traffic calming initiatives—a huge accomplishment in a city that is 20 square miles! They also helped advocate for the city council’s Green and Complete Streets Ordinance, which ensures that mobility users of all ages are able to move safely around the city.

Their work emphasizes the impact that an engaged group of neighbors can have in their city. As the coalition writes, “the streets of Providence belong to all of us. They are the veins that pump our community, economy, and family life.”

Section 01: Leaders & Their Projects

About The Leaders & Their Projects



JO ANN STREET Memphis, Tennessee



Before becoming the founder of Trikes for Tykes—an intersectional initiative that provides children in Memphis, Tennessee with bikes—Jo Ann Street worked in city government. This is one reason the organization has proved so successful. Jo Ann is able to coordinate between nonprofits and local agencies to meet her community’s needs, from bikes to rental assistance.

Jo Ann’s passion for cycling emerged after a childhood riding around Memphis. After several close family members passed away, a neighbor encouraged her to focus on the experiences she loved. It was clear that this was time spent outside, so she turned her energy toward creating a way for all young people to access bicycles. This quickly transformed into multifaceted programs for youth: a bicycle rodeo, where kids swerve through obstacles; bike safety training; tennis classes; and even free bikes for teenagers who need additional ways to get to work.

Jo Ann’s work is a testimony to cultivating deep connections with your community—and our unique human ability to alchemize personal heartbreak into collective liberation.

TRIKES FOR TYKES

emerged from heartbreak. A young child in Jo Ann Street’s neighborhood in Memphis, Tennessee fell off of their bike and passed away — a sudden tragedy that sparked Jo Ann and other leaders into action. They decided to host “bicycle safety programs” in their neighborhood, which taught children traffic signals and encouraged them to wear helmets whenever they rode. After seeing the joy that the rides sparked, they decided to fundraise for free bikes to ensure that any child in their community who wanted a bike could have one.

In many ways, this led to a full-fledged transformation. These days, Trikes for Tykes hosts bike sales for all age groups, safety clinics, and even bicycle rodeos—events where young people come together to race, swerve through cones, and show off their skills.

Through this work, Jo Ann has seen the community-wide impact that bike education can have. The program has been able to provide bikes to teenagers for easy access to their jobs; mitigate the over-reliance on cars in Memphis; and uplift the long legacy of Black cyclists in the city. Through her intersectional approach, Jo Ann’s impact has radiated out — revealing the ways that a transportation-first strategy can change lives on and off the road.



Images Courtesy Jo Ann Street

Section 01: Leaders & Their Projects

About The Leaders & Their Projects



ADÉ NEFF Los Angeles, California



Adé Neff became passionate about increasing access to bicycles and public transportation as a graduate student in Los Angeles. Back then, he would attempt to do simple activities like grocery shop and discover that there was no place to safely lock up his bike.

He started to imagine a different way—streets where young people could ride safely and bikes were a viable option for running errands—and eventually came up with the idea for Ride On! Bike Co-op. Since then, Ride On! has developed into a full-fledged community space that provides repairs and bike lessons for Leimert Park residents.

In a city as car-centric as Los Angeles, active transportation solutions are particularly needed. Adé now incorporates his background as a cycling enthusiast, small business owner, and academic to advocate for transportation justice in the community at large. This includes everything from making busy intersections safer to providing electric bicycles for the city's delivery workers.

RIDE ON! BIKE COOP

is a bicycle shop and community space in South Los Angeles where community members can receive no-to-low-cost bike repairs. In addition to the physical shop, Ride On! provides bike riding lessons and advocates for a safer, more equitable transportation environment throughout car-centric Los Angeles County.

Today, Ride On! advocates for a wide variety of initiatives around the county, including a new initiative to provide 200 free e-bikes to residents of South LA. "People in South LA that ride bikes are invisible. You have the folks that work late at night at the restaurants, at the bars, and by the time they get home, a lot of the trains and a lot of buses have stopped running, and they still have to get home," says Ride On!'s founder Adé Neff. "I'm looking forward to those folks being able to get bikes." The organization has also laid out plans to make intersections safer for pedestrians and cyclists—and transform Los Angeles into a city for all street users, not just car owners.



Images Courtesy Adé Neff

Section 01: Leaders & Their Projects

How to Get it Done

Transportation can feel like a huge issue (literally!)

that involves the coordination of federal, state, and local governments to mobilize millions of dollars for massive infrastructure projects like bridges and tunnels. While this is certainly true of some aspects of our transportation system, the transportation grassroots is alive and well!

Around the country, there are thousands of smaller organizations and individuals working to make getting around safer, easier, healthier, and better for the environment.

These organizations help us believe that a different world is possible—and are creating that world in their cities every single day.

In this guide, hear from three organizers from around the country about how they've successfully created transportation projects in their communities, from safer intersections to free bikes. **We hope this will provide inspiration—and spark action!**—in the place that you call home.

In this Guide:

- HOW DO WE KNOW WHERE TO START?**
- WHO'S IN YOUR CORNER?**
- WHERE'S THE MONEY?**
- HOW TO BUILD COALITIONS**
- HOW TO TELL YOUR STORY**
- HOW TO WORK WITH GOVERNMENT**
- WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU FEEL STUCK**



So, We've Got Big Problems

How Do We Know Where To Start?

Getting started is often the hardest part of developing a new project. The challenges around us feel enormous: Do you focus on the intersection where people have been injured or teaching young kids how to ride bikes? As the project leaders explain below, the most important thing is that you get started in any small way you can. There is no perfect, one-size fits all approach to active transit and transportation equity!

TALK to EVERYONE! Cast a wide net—you never know where your allies will come from.



“ When we started in 2019, I spent six months solely on assembling the coalition. It was six months of coffee dates with people representing organizations and local businesses across Providence. Anyone who I thought might be interested in joining the coalition, coming at these issues of intersectional transportation advocacy from a safety perspective, a climate change perspective, a public health perspective. I talked to local lawyers who represented cyclists who had been hit by drivers and to grocery stores who are serving low-income communities and have planned their location based on their bus routes. These initial conversations showed me that there was a real appetite for making change”

– LIZA



START with identifying the simple barriers.

“ Look in your neighborhood and see how you can get around. Are there barriers? If there are barriers and there are other things that you feel are concerning, maybe talk to two or three other members in your community to see how they feel. ”

– JO ANN



CHANGE your perspective of the streets you know.

“ Experience the city in different ways. If you're used to driving, get out of your car, walk, bike, take public transportation, really experience the city so you understand the full landscape of what transportation looks like. I think a lot of folks that work in transportation per se just drive all the time. They're in the suburbs, they drive into the city, they go to the office. And they come up with ideas that might sound good, but is it really effective? Is it really what the folks that actually use public transportation or walk or bike, are those infrastructures, what they need? Just being able to experience those different modes of transportation will inform how you go about the work. ”

– ADÉ

Section 02: How To Get It Done

Who's In Your Corner?

How To Find Teammates, Allies, & Collaborators

Building a strong team and cultivating allies is essential to creating more equitable neighborhoods and transportation systems. As Jo Ann, Liza, and Adé describe, it is important to gather a wide variety of stakeholders, who might come from unexpected places. Taking an intersectional approach – for example, considering the needs of people in wheelchairs along with those who ride bikes on a daily basis – will ensure the solutions you come up with are stronger and apply to a larger group of people. It will also deepen your advocacy base as people who may not have seen themselves as aligned come together to create stronger, safer neighborhoods.

Think about street users beyond the usual categories.



“ Make sure that you assemble all the different users of the street together. And for folks who are getting around in different ways other than driving private cars, make sure you bring the bus riders, the pedestrians, the skateboarders, the wheelchair users, folks who are walking with canes and walkers. Make sure you bring them all together to amplify your voice.”

– LIZA

Put the issue first and see who shows up.



“ You want to bring people to the table and make a list of who needs to be here. It may be that the person that you invite may not even ride a bike, but they may support traffic and safety in your community. So bring out issues that you think would be applicable to everyone and you would be surprised at who all will join your mission.”

– JO ANN

Build outward from your existing network.



“ Because I had been working with different organizations on the ground around transportation equity, I had a team already built. I knew a lot of different organizations within South LA. So I went to people and said, ‘Look, this is a project that I’m working on. I think you’re a good fit. Let’s sit down. Let’s talk. Let’s see where we can collaborate.’ It was really about collaboration with me and the folks that we worked together with.”

– ADÉ



Where's The Money?



How To Fund Your Idea

When it comes to sparking community change, a lot of us struggle with the “m-word:” money. While it can be straightforward to speak with people about your visions for the neighborhood, it can be intimidating to ask for cold hard cash. This is why it’s so important to build a team.

Together, you can leverage your network to fundraise for essential items like paint, signs, or even snacks for your organizing meetings.

With a group, fundraising can transform from a dreaded task to a point of celebration. Strategize your asks as a team.



“ One of the things you can do is list people who you think may be supportive of your costs. Each person can identify five people. Once you get together, you can go and do a presentation, and that's what people really like - to put on a presentation and to be present. The money's just not going to come knocking on your door. You've got to go and get it.”

– JO ANN

Start with who you know, and build outward.



“ My team had about 10 people. And each of those 10 had a group of 20 people that they could reach out to. With the ioby training, we understood, we start with the group that we have and build up. Who are you going to ask for \$10? Who are the people you're going to ask for \$300? You have that list together and then you take a day or two out of the week where you're actually making those calls. This is all before you go live with the crowdfunding.

Once you have that group of folks, you take the project live. People see that, ‘You just went live an hour ago and they're already at this amount, so let me just give so we can help them get closer!’ That was a really instrumental tactic that we learned with crowdfunding, and I think that's how we were able to be successful with our project.”

– ADÉ

Build on the trust within your community.



“ I had done relationship building, but it wasn't until I was talking to one of the representatives of ioby, feeling like a failure that I couldn't do any fundraising. He reminded me of all the activities that I had done in the neighborhood, and told me to capitalize on that. People trust me. They know that I have their interests at heart, that they can come and we can have a conversation. I sold water in the park, so when men would be playing basketball, I would go to the local store and get ice and bottled water. And they would say, ‘You brought us ice and bottled water,’ so they trusted what I was doing. And I was like, ‘Where are your kids? Do they want to ride a bike?’ And I told them, ‘We're going to have a bike rodeo,’ and they were all in.”

– JO ANN

Section 02: How To Get It Done

How To Build Coalitions

& Convince The Unconvinced

When it comes to neighborhood change, people will not always be onboard, particularly when it comes to shifting deep-seated behaviors like driving cars. While transportation can seem straightforward on the surface—who doesn't want safer streets?—New policies often intersect with contentious issues like the price of land, the history of transportation discrimination in the United States, and even how to best address climate change.

It's important to grapple with these issues in meaningful ways in order to build trust in your community over time. And remember: Allies can always be found, even in the most unexpected places.

Pick your battles... and thicken your skin!



“We're living in a deeply, deeply polarized country where change making of almost any kind can ignite a lot of drama. So it's important when you're pursuing change to a transportation system to make sure that the communication strategy is universal and stuff that we can all agree on like safety and hopefully sustainability and hopefully equity as well.

The main thing is growing a thick skin and knowing that if you are out there and you're trying to make change in your community in any way, some people are not going to like it. Some people are going to like it a lot”

– LIZA.

Look for partners in unusual places.



“Some people who supported us were part of a motorcycle club. They thought, ‘How can we help?’ So we had a block party with them. They brought everything that we needed and then they would ride and do obstacle courses with their motorcycles so the kids can see how fun it is to have a bike. I said, ‘This is a motorbike, but they probably started off riding a bike, a single speed bike and maybe a 10 speed bike.’ I learned that you meet people where they are.

If they like tomatoes and you like tomatoes, I think you can learn about tomatoes too. Learn what other people like and once they think you are on their side, they will support you in what you're trying to do, and so it's a win-win.”

– JO ANN



Section 02: How To Get It Done

How To Tell Your Story So People Will Care!

Storytelling is one of the most powerful ways to get people onboard for a project, whether that means they feel inspired to donate their time or contribute to your fundraising campaign. But how do you go about crafting a narrative that sparks people's interest and compels them to act?

The leaders described the ways they successfully used social media, public media campaigns like billboards, word of mouth, and storytelling sessions to develop stories that resonated with residents.

It's okay if it takes time to develop yours. It's more important to have something that feels authentic and true to your community than it is to gain thousands of social media followers in a short period of time!



Take the time to get it right.



“Crafting the story about the work took some time. It was a team effort to really figure out the story that we wanted to tell, how we wanted to tell it, and also building an emotional aspect so people could relate. It took several drafts and several people at the table to come together with ideas to make it happen. It was a collaborative effort; you can't have enough people to collaborate with on projects like this.”

– ADÉ

Cover your communications bases.



“When we first started out, we had grant funding to do a very large scale communications campaign that had billboards and bus wraps and mailers direct to people's houses saying ‘hello we're here, we're on the road towards making change, join us,’ to introduce ourselves to the city. When that funding ran out, we shifted to a more traditional social media strategy and a newsletter.

We do texting directly to people's phones when there's projects happening in their neighborhood. We try to be fully bilingual in our outreach, considering the majority of Providence residents are Spanish speakers. We just try to do a little bit of it all.”

– LIZA

Show up for others and they'll show up for you.



“I think it's important on the ground level, to work with the community organizations, local block clubs and neighborhood councils. Just being in other people's company, going to events, going to block club meetings, being of service, there are many important ways to go about engagement.”

– ADÉ

How To Work

With Government

There's no way around it: government agencies play a huge role when it comes to building effective transportation systems, from managing budgets to setting the regulations that control the speed limit on your block.

Learning how to work with them in an effective, mutually beneficial way will help ensure the success and longevity of your active transit project. One of the best ways to get involved is by attending city council meetings and starting to meet people who work at the hyper-local level.

They will be most familiar with the challenges you are describing—and may oversee larger budgets than you might think. By consistently participating and rallying constituent support, you will show that there is a strong appetite for equitable transportation.

Start small, and get to know the players.



“ It's important to work with your local government officials. You start small. The first group of folks I started working with were block clubs and local neighborhood council offices, and then eventually you get to the council person that's head of the district. At a certain point, everybody walks in that same circle so you get to meet different people, you get to interact with folks and you get to know them. They get to know your face. You get to know their names. And then you are able to actually have a conversation about what the city needs and see where there's alignment with everybody.”

– **ADÉ**

Build connections beyond your own issues.



“ We have a very small city here where personal relationships drive everything. And my biggest advice to other transit advocates is to build relationships with people who are working in the local government, with your elected officials. Go out to their events, community meetings, just get involved. And not just for your issue. Transportation connects to housing, climate, food access. We are out there using the streets to do everything in our lives. So it's really important to give in order to get, and to give some of your time and energy to causes that connect to transportation but aren't necessarily along the same mission. It's amazing how you can draw attention to an issue that you deeply care about by giving some of your time and energy to other issues.”

– **LIZA**

Don't just ask, find out how you can help.



“ I have a background in government, I was able to contact a community services agency and other friends in the neighborhood to help them with renters assistance and renters issues, and because of that, you solved a problem or you've taken the nail out of the lion's paw. At that point, their stress level is reduced. Their expectations are higher.

– **JO ANN**

What To Do When You Feel Stuck

Feeling stuck is a normal, healthy part of all movement-building work—we are up against huge, centuries-old inequities, and transformative change does not happen overnight.

When you feel stuck, it is essential to pause, take a break, and find the elements of a project that help you feel inspired again. What made you become an activist in the first place?

The goal is to avoid burnout and participate in movement work for the long haul.

And remember: You don't have to do it alone. Teams (and organizations like ioby!) are there to support you through the highs and lows of community-led change.



Don't forget to celebrate!



“ Consider all viewpoints and be strong. Take breaks. Celebrate every small victory. Every tiny victory, every tree planted, every mile of bike lane, every intersection that's done, celebrate those victories because the big ones, it's going to take a long time to make the big changes that we know we need to see.”

– LIZA

Remember the stakes... & remember to feel the love!



“ I love my community, I love the people in it, I love my church, I love what I do, and so when you have that much inside, everything looks better. I lost a lot of family members in one short period.

I lost my younger brother, my mother, my dad, and uncles. Almost everyone, and these are people I shared memories with. Sometimes, when you think that all is lost, I was told to go to a place where I was the happiest. My family loved the parks and they loved riding bikes and they loved swimming, so when I went to the park, I was there and people came up and spent time with me. So the fact that people have shown me love and trust, caring and support, I can't do anything but give back what has been put inside of me.

– JO ANN

More Resources

We hope you are excited to launch a project in your own community—but we know that we haven't covered every single idea in this guide! Here are some more of the great ioby projects around street safety and sustainable, equitable transit, as well as some of our favorite other resources to help you get started. Once you have an idea for your own community, ioby is here to help bring your idea to life.

Remember: the most important thing is to get started. Trial and error are a natural part of any process seeking to create transformative change. Good luck out there.



MORE **iooby** ACTIVE TRANSIT PROJECTS:

- [Saint Luke's Pointe Traffic Calming](#)
- [CrossWalk Flags](#)
- [Walk this Way LA](#)
- [#ChrisCrosswalk](#)
- [Nuestra Aveida: Cesar Chavez Reimagined](#)
- [Brilliant Underpass on the Mill River Trail](#)
- [Bike Repair Miami](#)
- [Bicycle Stories](#)
- [WE Bike: Women's Empowerment Through Bicycles!](#)
- [Jersey City Bike Racks](#)
- [Arapahoe Street Protected Bike Lane](#)
- [Cleveland Refugee Bike Project](#)
- [Delivering Justice](#)
- [Kids Love Bikes Campaign](#)
- [YES for a Healthier LA](#)
- [El Puente Bike Club Youth Bike Summit](#)
- [Walk Austin is Making it Official](#)

OTHER RESOURCES:

- [How to pilot a car-free weekend street closure in your neighborhood](#)
- [How to help peds walk safely with Crosswalk Flags](#)
- [How to encourage healthful walking with helpful signage](#)
- [A Citizen's Guide to Slowing Down Traffic on Your Street](#)
- [Parachute Canada's Guide to Improving Pedestrian Safety](#)
- [A Resident's Guide for Creating Safer a Communities for Walking and Biking](#)
- [How community engagement can increase bicyclist and pedestrian safety](#)
- [How to partner with your city to create new bike lanes](#)
- [How Our Streets Minneapolis created the Whittier Lyndale Bikeway](#)
- [The National Association of City Transportation Officials Urban Bikeway Design Guide](#)
- [How to set up a bike cooperative](#)

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Section 3: More Resources