



TRANSIT EQUITY DAYS

in La Crosse!

January 29 - February 4, 2024

For the past six years, the Labor Network for Sustainability has led a national effort to highlight the importance of accessible and sustainable public transportation as a civil right on February 4, the birthday of Rosa Parks. [Learn more at their site.](#)

In La Crosse, we have celebrated Transit Equity Days since 2020. Our 2024 programming lasted from January 29 through February 4.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO MADE THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM A SUCCESS!

Thanks especially to event co-sponsors who helped publicize the event and encouraged their contacts to participate, Karmyn at LPL who coordinated with us on the display and pulled the wonderful books that were part of it, the Fryseth family for displaying their 3D map prototype, and Bridget for the display materials. Thanks, too, to

Obbie and Rozie for their wonderful program about going car-free, the local AARP folks for hosting the film screening and panel, and all the great elected leaders who rode and listened!

Ridership was UP during TED which means more people tried out the bus!



LPL display

SHARE YOUR TRANSIT STORIES! [Our online form](#) is always open for business! We will update our website with new stories soon. [Share your thoughts now!](#)

OFFICE HOUR ON THE BUS Thank you elected leaders for taking time out of your busy schedules to join us on the bus!

- La Crosse City Council President Chris Kahlow (5)
- La Crosse City Council member Doug Happel (12)
- La Crosse City Council member Mac Kiel (7) (and children!)
- La Crosse City Council member Rebecca Schwarz (10)
- La Crosse County Board Chair Monica Kruse
- La Crosse County Board Supervisor Maureen Freedland
- La Crosse County Board Supervisor Ralph Geary
- La Crosse County Board Supervisor David Pierce
- Onalaska Mayor Kim Smith
- Onalaska City Council member Leanne Stokes

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Monday, January 29 at 11:15 a.m. at Grand River Station Transit Center: Hosted by MTU's Adam Lorentz, this event featured remarks by State Representative Jill

Billings and Mayor Mitch Reynolds who read and discussed the 2024 Transit Equity Days proclamation. Also in attendance, representatives of the Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit, city council members, county board supervisors, and area transit advocates. Local media helped by providing great coverage:

- [Fox2548](#)
- [WEAU](#)
- [WIZM](#)
- [WKBT](#)
- [WXOW](#)
- [La Crosse Tribune](#)
- [The Racquet](#) (UWL)
- [Wisconsin Public Radio](#)

Wednesday evening, January 31 at 7 p.m. at the Southside Neighborhood Center, 1300 S. 6th: *Transportation Liberation* In this multimedia workshop, Obbie and RoZ described the steps on their trail toward Transportation Liberation, and discuss a multitude of pragmatic ideas on how to make driving optional. The program was an update of one originally presented in Portland in 2008 at the "Toward Car-Free Cities" conference. [You can view the original here](#). We hope to have the updated version available online soon.

Thursday, February 1, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. ONLINE: [Transit 2 Trails 4 All](#) The National Sierra Club is continuing its campaign for equitable access to the outdoors with this initiative to urge better public transit access to recreation and natural areas including city parks, beaches, state and national parks and more. View a recording of the program at the Wisconsin Sierra Club page here: <https://www.facebook.com/SierraClubWI/videos/1823149808147267/>

Sunday, February 4 ALL DAY - The La Crosse MTU celebrated and honored the life and activism of Rosa Parks and the movement to desegregate and expand accessibility of public transportation by placing a poster and a rose on a front seat of every MTU bus. Thank you [Monet Floral](#) for donating the roses! Check out "[The Power of Public Transportation in Social Justice](#)" by Dana Malapit in the McGill International Review. We honor and thank Rosa Parks and the activists who came before and after her.

Sunday, February 4 at 1:30 p.m. at the Rivoli: [The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks](#) Based on the bestselling biography by Jeanne Theoharis and executive produced by award-winning journalist Soledad O'Brien, this award-winning film corrects

the record on Rosa Parks' often-overlooked accomplishments and the erasure of her radical politics. In short, what we are taught in school about Rosa Parks is a mere fraction of the full story about who she truly was. There will be a panel discussion about transit equity following the film. Hosted by [AARP-Wisconsin](#). If you missed the film at the Rivoli, you can stream it on Peacock. Thank you to the AARP and to those who attended and participated, especially our panelists, Rozie Brooks, Liz Fryseth, and Obbie King.

Monday, February 5 from 1 to 3 p.m. ONLINE: Transit Equity Day livestream If you missed the [Labor Network for Sustainability](#) live stream, you can watch it on the LNS YouTube channel. Learn more at <https://www.labor4sustainability.org/transit-equity-2024/livestream/>

SUPPORT THE STRONGER COMMUNITIES THROUGH BETTER TRANSIT ACT!

Thanks to Congressman Hank Johnson (GA-04), the [Stronger Communities Through Better Transit Act](#) will be reintroduced in Congress, but we need YOUR help to promote it! The bill would provide for dedicated, stable funding for public transportation around the country. Please use this tool to urge our elected officials to support and co-sponsor the bill. tinyurl.com/SupportTransitBill

SUPPORT THE TRANSIT TO TRAILS ACT!

SUPPORT THE MARKEY

[Generating Resilient, Environmentally Exceptional National \(GREEN\) Streets Act](#)

This bill establishes national goals to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions and improve the resilience of the transportation system. Specifically, the bill directs the Department of Transportation (DOT) to establish minimum standards for states to decrease greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMTs) on the National Highway System; DOT to establish measures for states to assess and reduce carbon dioxide; states and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to consider projects and strategies that reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions and decrease per capita VMT's; states and MPOs to publish an analysis of the impact on per capita VMTs and mobile source greenhouse gas emissions for each project that adds new lanes or otherwise increases traffic capacity and costs more than \$25 million; states that are out of compliance with the per capita VMT standards or carbon dioxide or greenhouse gas emission measures to dedicate federal highway funding to achieve compliance; and DOT to establish national transit access standards and performance measures for transit accessibility, transit stop distance, and transit mode share.

[CHECK OUT THIS BRIEF VIDEO ABOUT TRANSIT EQUITY DAY!](#)



Thinking about equity. Did you know?

- [The average annual cost to own and operate a new private vehicle in 2023](#), according to the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, was more than \$12,000. While owning an older car is less expensive, older cars are also subject to more maintenance and repair costs.
- According to the White House, Wisconsin [residents who take public transit spend an extra 62.7% of their time](#) commuting and non-White households are 5.9 times more likely to commute via public transportation.
- In a 2018 transportation access and equity report, the [Wisconsin Sierra Club](#) [noted](#) that most of the state's transportation budget goes to state highways, debt service and local road aid. In 2015, less than 5% of the transportation budget went to public transit. For the 2023-2025 budget, transit had been removed from the transportation fund and moved to the general fund.
- The [Wisconsin Department of Transportation estimates](#) that 10 to 20 percent of La Crosse county residents older than 15 are non-drivers. And 30 to 40 percent of City of La Crosse residents older than 15 are non-drivers. Almost one-third of state residents are non-drivers.
- [The EPA reports](#) that 2021 emissions from the transportation sector are the highest of any sector (29% of total) and that emissions from passenger cars and trucks make up more than half of the sector.

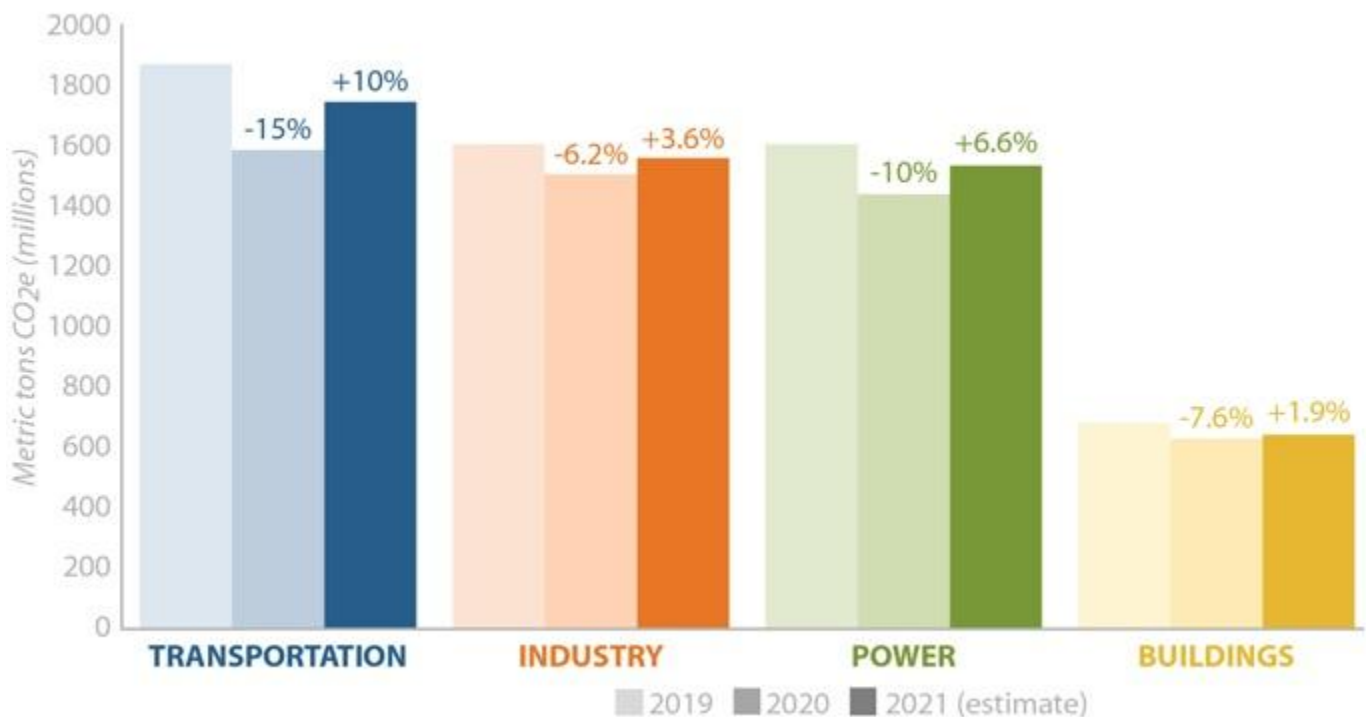
- [Communities with strong public transportation](#) can reduce the nation's **carbon emissions** by [37 million metric tons yearly](#), according to a report from the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions
- Public transit can reduce the risk of road accidents. Rural residents travel about 33 percent more than urban residents, and although rural areas only make up 19 percent of the population, they account for around 49 percent of traffic fatalities [according to the American Public Transportation Association](#)
- In 2022, 547 people died and more than 2,500 were seriously injured in Wisconsin traffic crashes, per the [Wisconsin Department of Transportation](#).
- Transit is *ten times safer than driving*, according to [a study published by the American Public Transportation Association](#).

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AS A CIVIL RIGHT

- [Tribute to MLK: Public Transportation as a Civil Right](#) by Erica Schlaikjer
- [The Power of Public Transportation in Social Justice](#) by Dana Malapit
- [Public Transit's Role in Fighting Racism](#) by Alex Wittenberg
- [Why Transit Equity Matters](#) by Christy Veeder

U.S. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS BY MAJOR EMITTING SECTOR

In millions of metric tons CO₂e, year-on-year percent change, 2019-2021



SOURCE: Rhodium Group

InsideClimate News

Did you know?

[Rosa Parks' "Featherlite Pancake" recipe](#) was written on the back of an envelope. After she refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Ala., bus in 1955, she and her husband lost their jobs and eventually moved to Detroit. They struggled financially and had to be frugal, which is why she reused papers, like banking envelopes, for recipes. Dan Pashman for NPR

TRANSIT EQUITY DAY PRINCIPLES

Public Transit provides basic mobility for many in our communities. It is also essential urban infrastructure—just like roads, bridges, tunnels and utilities—that is crucial to the economic, social and environmental well-being of all our regions.

Everyone has a right to a public mass transit system that includes:

Safe, reliable, environmentally-sustainable and affordable transit that is accessible to all, regardless of income, national origin, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, or ability.

An affordable public transit system that reliably connects people in all communities to the places we need to travel: home, work, school, places of worship, shopping, health, and recreation, in as efficient, and timely a manner as possible. We must ensure that all communities have access to transit; no community should be left behind.

Public transit in rural, less densely populated communities should be provided in any master transportation plan despite the special challenges that may present.

Living wages, benefits, safe working conditions, and union rights for transit workers, including those who manufacture transit equipment, and access to family-sustaining transit jobs and training opportunities for people from underserved communities.

A just transition for workers and communities who are dependent on our current automobile and highway-centered transportation system, to ensure that no one is left behind as we transition to a more public, accessible, and cleaner transit-based system.

Rapid transition of our transit and school bus systems to electric, non-polluting buses powered by electricity from renewables.

Safe, healthy and livable neighborhoods that are connected by public transportation and by bicycle pathways and sidewalks, and that are planned to expand safe access to transit and reduce single occupancy vehicle miles traveled.

Dedicated and sustainable public funding for public transit.

Co-sponsors (please email us to help co-sponsor this event!)

 La Crosse Area Transit Advocates	 LACROSSE MTU MUNICIPAL TRANSIT UTILITY	 SIERRA CLUB	 COULEE REGION GROUP WISCONSIN CHAPTER	 Planned Parenthood® of Wisconsin, Inc.
 S.M.R.T. Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit	 SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE	 CITIZEN ACTION OF WISCONSIN	eliminating racism empowering women ywca La Crosse	
 CLIMATE ALLIANCE For The Common Good	 AARP® Wisconsin	 DAN Disability Action Network	Your logo goes here! Contact us to co-sponsor! LaCrosseTransitAdvocates@proton.me e	

