

**FEBRUARY 4, 2019**  
**ORGANIZING TOOL KIT**

### ***Thank you for joining this important effort!***

Transit Equity Day is a collaborative effort of several organizations and unions to promote public transit as a civil right and a strategy to combat climate change.

We are choosing Rosa Parks' birthday because she is an iconic figure of the civil rights era who chose the tactic of refusing to give up her seat on the bus. We want to make the connection to this act of resistance to highlight the rights of all people to high-quality public transportation powered by clean/renewable energy. This day of action will also help to enforce a broader strategy that promotes a "full spectrum" just transition from the fossil fuel economy (energy, energy efficiency, transportation, waste, agriculture...) to clean, renewable energy as part of confronting the climate crisis. Increasing, non-fossil fuel, public transportation is a foundation to achieving this transition.

A just transition requires that we uphold worker and civil rights. This means that everyone should have the right and access to free (or at least affordable) public transportation regardless of age, race, or class. It also includes supporting the rights of workers to organize in the sectors that will build, operate and maintain public transportation infrastructure, as well as provide the services.

We also want to promote the principle of public vs. private investment in public transportation - the need for public resources and infrastructure (public transportation, public regulation of our energy systems, a stronger public sector overall, etc.), to lead and administer the transition to fossil fuel free public transportation.

This Organizing Toolkit will provide you with resources that will help you to organize your own activities the beginning February 4, 2019 and ways to connect to the broader network of organizations that will be taking action. **Also please register your activity [HERE](#) so we can keep track and lift up your efforts.**

***We also invite you to join us for a Social Media Launch towards Transit Equity Day on December 21, 2018!*** December 21 was the day that the historic Montgomery Bus Boycott officially ended after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a lower court decision to integrate the bus system. To participate on December 21 please contact us at [TransitEquity@labor4sustainability.org](mailto:TransitEquity@labor4sustainability.org).

### **Here are the resources that you will find in this toolkit:**

Pg. 4 – What you can do  
Pg. 5 – Op-Ed Template  
Pg. 8 – Draft Resolution  
Pg. 10 – Graphics and Social Media  
Pg. 11 – Informational Palm Card  
Pg. 12 - Logos/Sticker Templates

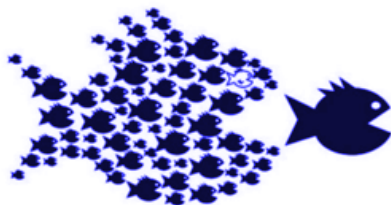
**If you are planning an activity the week of February 4 please let us know! Or for more information, please contact [TransitEquity@labor4sustainability.org](mailto:TransitEquity@labor4sustainability.org)**

**Website: [labor4sustainability.org/transitequityday](http://labor4sustainability.org/transitequityday)**

## SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS



Music City Riders United



Workers' Dignity ~ Dignidad Obrera



Pittsburghers for Public Transit



### What you can do

A main goal of Transit Equity Day is to support the efforts of many people who are already working to support public transit in their communities. Thousands of people in the U.S. are already organizing campaigns through their unions and organizations. We would love to highlight your work and connect it to the broader network of activities on February 4, 2019.

***Please note that some groups are planning activities into the week of February 11!***

So if you can't organize something for February 4, no worries - we would love to have your organization connect with this important national effort.

**Please register your activity [HERE](#) so we can keep track and lift up your efforts.**

Email us at [TransitEquity@labor4sustainability.org](mailto:TransitEquity@labor4sustainability.org) if you have any questions.

Here are some ideas of activities you can organize on Transit Equity Day whether you are part of an existing campaign or not:

#### **EDUCATE**

- Convene an educational event about public transit as a civil right and as a key strategy to confront climate change.
- Wear a button or sticker to your workplace showing support for public transit as a civil right.
- Get an op-ed published in your local newspaper.

#### **AGITATE**

- Organize a direct action to support a local campaign for quality public transit for all.

#### **ORGANIZE**

- Get your union local, organization city council, transportation board and others to pass a resolution supporting public transportation as a civil right.
- Get your union to establish a climate action committee.

## Op-Ed Template

# February 4 is Rosa Parks' Birth Anniversary. Let's Honor Her Legacy by Continuing Her Struggle!

February 4, 2019 marks the [106<sup>th</sup>](#) birth anniversary of visionary movement leader Rosa Parks. Anniversaries such as this are not just moments for celebration. They are a time to rededicate ourselves to the struggles they commemorate.

Rosa Parks is best remembered for her role in the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. The legally sanctioned racial discrimination in access to public transit that the bus boycott campaign targeted has ended. But barriers to adequate public transit access remain, making it harder for people – particularly people of color and poor people – from being able to get to jobs, school, and wherever else they need to go. The lack of adequate public transit service also exacerbates environmental disparities and climate change.

Only [5.2 percent](#) of commuters nationwide use public transit to get to work, but 11 percent each of Black and Asian-American commuters and 7.7 percent of Latinx commuters use transit. People of color are clearly more dependent on transit.

This is partly because of vehicle ownership disparities. Nationwide, [84](#) percent of households own vehicles, but the corresponding numbers are 69 percent for Black households and 78 percent for Latinx households compared to 87 percent for white households.

Yet when it comes to reductions in transit service, communities of color bear the brunt.

In [Portland, OR](#), transit service cuts have been steepest in Black and Latinx neighborhoods, where residents often have to “negotiate obstacles such as busy and dangerous intersections, poor street lighting, and limited sidewalk availability” just to get to their bus stop.

In [San Francisco](#), communities of color are impacted by long wait times and overcrowded buses compared to the citywide average, even as fares have risen.

In the [Twin Cities](#), Minnesota, the transit agency was planning a commuter rail line that would pass through a historically Black community without even stopping there – after cutting bus service in the community. Fortunately, the federal government stepped in and compelled the agency to change course.

These are just three examples of a wider trend.

Proximity of transit stops does not guarantee access either. For low-income households, fares are a critical determinant of access. From 1990 through 2014 (the latest year for which we have data), nationwide [average transit fare per trip](#) decreased 2 percent when accounting for inflation. (A word of

explanation – most of us have experienced transit fares increasing, which they have in terms of face-value dollars. In inflation adjusted terms, however, they fell slightly over this period.)

In the same period, however, the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile of household income (the income such that 10 percent of households earn less) actually [fell](#) 4.7 percent in inflation adjusted terms – meaning, the rate at which poorer households became poorer outstripped the slight fall in transit fares. Concretely, this means that poor households spent a greater share of their income on transit in 2014 compared to 1990.

To this mix of lack of service for communities of color and rising fares as a share of income for low-income households, add the environmental impact of our auto-dependent transportation system, a dependence perpetuated by underinvestment in transit.

Automobile engines emit pollutants such as [nitrogen oxides](#), which are strongly associated with asthma and other illnesses. And some populations are disproportionately more exposed to these pollutants than others. A 2017 [study](#) found striking racial disparities in transportation-related nitrogen dioxide emissions. Nationwide average nitrogen dioxide concentration in 2010 was 8.9 parts per billion (ppb), and white people on average experienced a concentration of 7.8 ppb, while the respective numbers for Black, Latinx, and Asian-American populations were 10.0 ppb, 11.2 ppb, and 12.1 ppb.

More transit use (especially electrified transit) will reduce these exposures and narrow the disparities. Even a traditional internal combustion engine bus consumes about [15 percent](#) less fuel per passenger transported than a personal car. Less fuel consumed translates into less emissions of any kind.

Internal combustion engines also emit carbon dioxide, which traps solar radiation and warms the planet. A hotter planet means more blistering [heat waves](#), violent [storms](#), devastating [droughts and wildfires](#), and [rising seas](#). These phenomena pose an existential threat to humanity [worldwide](#) and in the [United States](#).

As with everything in our unequal society, climate change impacts aren't equally distributed. Black Americans are [52 percent](#) likelier to be exposed to extreme heat than their white counterparts. Native Alaskan communities are [losing](#) their ancestral homelands to rising seas. And disasters such as hurricanes have a particularly [devastating](#) impact on places like Puerto Rico, which has a [44.4 percent](#) poverty rate that's almost three and a half times the national rate of [12.3](#) percent – and no [representation](#) in Congress.

Transportation is the [largest and fastest growing](#) source of greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. economy. Clearly, expanding and electrifying public transit to give large numbers of people a meaningful alternative to driving to work can go a long way in reducing our emissions. Doing so will give us a better chance of avoiding the most dangerous impacts of climate change, and begin to reverse the profound injustices that characterize our unequal, warming world.

But investing in transit expansion isn't all about undoing the bad. It's also about expanding the good. Transit creates lots of good jobs. In 2017, there were more than [176,000](#) bus drivers in the U.S., with

median hourly wages of \$19.61, and more than [12,000](#) streetcar and subway operators in the U.S., with median hourly wages of \$31.93. Compare this to the [\\$18.12](#) median wage for all occupations and the [\\$15.19](#) median wage for all transportation occupations.

Plus, many of these are union jobs. The [190,000](#) members of the Amalgamated Transit Union and the [140,000](#) members of the Transport Workers Union include large numbers of transit workers. Union membership gives these workers legally protected rights on the job that non-union workers lack. And union members earn more – the median weekly earnings of union workers is [\\$1,041](#), compared to \$829 for nonunion workers.

So transit is an arena of continuing struggles for racial, economic and environmental justice. And with the needed investment and the right policies, transit can be a key component of the transition to a just and climate-friendly economy, and can create lots of good union jobs.

So let's organize for better, more accessible public transit for all to honor Rosa Parks' legacy.

**For More Information:** [TransitEquity@labor4sustainability.org](mailto:TransitEquity@labor4sustainability.org)

## Draft Resolution For Adoption by Union Locals and Internationals, Community Organizations, Religious Congregations, and Local Governments

### Transit Equity Day

WHEREAS Rosa Parks was an iconic figure in the movements for social justice and racial equality, and played a major role in the inception of the Civil Rights movement that ended legal segregation in the United States; and

WHEREAS the immediate focus of Rosa Parks' historic protest was the unequal access of African-Americans to public transit; and

WHEREAS unequal access to public transit based on race, income, and disability have persisted to this day, and have to a degree become worse, with cuts in public funding for transit and consequent fare increases in many transit systems; and

WHEREAS public transit jobs in the United States have historically been good jobs that paid family-supporting wages, but in parallel to the cuts in public funding for transit and the trend of increasing fares, there is a growing marginalization of transit workers, who are facing worsening work conditions and erosion of their collective bargaining rights; and

WHEREAS affordable, reliable public transit is an essential public service, on par with utilities such as water and electricity; and

WHEREAS humanity is faced with the growing crisis of climate change, with record-breaking temperatures, with consequences including sea level rise, prolonged drought, more frequent wildfires, more severe storms and flooding, and spread of diseases; and

WHEREAS the effects of climate change disproportionately hurt workers, people of color, and poor people, and constitute a civil rights crisis of our time, as seen so vividly in the recent devastation from hurricane impacts in Texas, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and elsewhere; and

WHEREAS the overwhelming scientific consensus attributes the warming trend to human emissions of greenhouse gases from the combustion of fossil fuels such as oil, gas, and coal; and

WHEREAS it is essential for the survival of humanity to drastically cut our emissions of greenhouse gases and convert our economy to renewable non-emitting energy sources; and

WHEREAS in recognition of the realities of climate change and the need for a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, the AFL-CIO passed "Resolution 55: Climate Change, Energy and Union Jobs" at its 2017 convention; and

WHEREAS emissions from the transportation system are a major part of greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS transitioning our transportation system from excessive automobile dependence to public transit, especially electrified public transit with electricity from renewable sources, is key to transitioning our economy from fossil fuels to renewable energy and cutting our greenhouse gas emissions; and



WHEREAS the required expansion of public transit to address the climate crisis provides an unprecedented opportunity to continue the tradition of Rosa Parks and the civil rights movement by ensuring that transit systems are affordable and accessible, and that people of color, low-income people, people with disabilities, and other marginalized populations have full access to the benefits of public transit; and

WHEREAS the required expansion of public transit to address the climate crisis also provides an unprecedented opportunity to create a large number of good, high-skill, family-supporting transit operation jobs, as well as construction jobs for building new transit facilities; and

WHEREAS the growth of public transit will also reduce automotive pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and particulate matter that have the worst impacts on the communities closest to highways and other major roads, which tend to be disproportionately communities of color and low-income communities; and

WHEREAS increased community access to public transit, reduction in racial, economic and other disparities in access to transit and clean air and in the burden of climate change impacts, and increased opportunities for employment in good jobs, form a key part of a “just transition” from a carbon-intensive, fossil-fuel based, highly unequal economy to a clean, renewable energy based, just economy;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the (insert name of union/organization here) supports the call to observe a Day of Action on Public Transportation as a Civil Right on February 4, 2019; and

RESOLVED that the (insert name of union/organization here) will draw attention to the continuing racial, economic, and other inequalities in access to adequate public transit, and the need for affordable and accessible transit, through the Day of Action; and

RESOLVED that the (insert name of union/organization here) will use the Day of Action to highlight the vital role that can be played by expansion of public transit in the required shift from a climate-destroying fossil fuel powered economy to a climate-protecting, renewable-powered economy, with a just transition for communities and workers; and

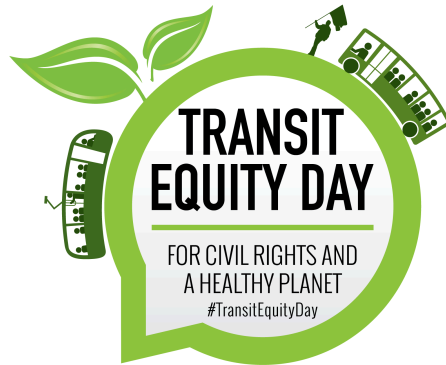
RESOLVED that the (insert name of union/organization here) will form a Climate Action Committee to plan and implement equitable, just climate solutions at the level of the organization; and

RESOLVED that the (insert name of union/organization here) will support legislation at the Federal, state, and local levels that:

- Increases public funding for transit, including funding to expand transit systems, especially in underserved neighborhoods, communities of color, low-income communities, and communities burdened by pollution;
- Uses a part of the increased public funding to offset the need for fare increases, and reduces (or at least caps) fares;
- Eliminates or reduces fares for particular populations such as seniors, people with disabilities, and K-12 students;
- Increases the accessibility of public transit for people with disabilities;
- Increases job opportunities in transit system operation as well as construction, and ensures that the new jobs pay family-supporting wages, provide good benefits, and give workers the opportunity to organize a union and bargain collectively without employer pressure and intimidation; and
- Prioritizes the hiring of low-income people, people of color, people from communities currently underserved by transit and/or overexposed to vehicular and other forms of pollution, people with disabilities, workers displaced from polluting industries, formerly incarcerated people, and other marginalized populations for transit operation and construction jobs.

## GRAPHICS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

### Logo



**Hashtag:** #TransitEquityDay

### Twitter Accounts

#### Sponsoring Organizations

Amalgamated Transit Union: @ATUComm

Americans for Transit: @4Transit

Chainbreaker Collective: @ChainbreakerSF

Georgia Stand-Up: @GA\_STANDUP

Institute for Policy Studies: @IPS\_DC

Labor Community Strategy Center/ Bus Riders Union: @BusRidersUnion

Labor Network for Sustainability: @LN4S

NAACP: @naacp\_ldf

OPAL: @OPALEJOR

Partnership for Working Families: @P4WF

Pittsburghers for Public Transit: @Pgh4PubTransit

Sierra Club: @SierraClub

**Website:** [labor4sustainability.org/transitequityday](http://labor4sustainability.org/transitequityday)

## TRANSIT EQUITY DAY: For Civil Rights and a Healthy Planet

On February 4, 2019 We are taking action to highlight the rights of all people to high-quality public transit run on clean/renewable energy. Building and expanding public transit helps to move us from a fossil fuel economy to clean, renewable energy and transportation systems promote healthier communities and confront climate change.

A transition to a clean energy economy should also guarantee that everyone should have the right to free (or at least affordable) public transit regardless of age, race, or class. It also means that we support the rights of workers to organize in the sectors that will build public transit infrastructure, that will operate and maintain our public transit systems and provide the services.

Rosa Parks' historic act of resistance to not give up her seat on the bus was a critical spark to the civil rights movement. We want to honor this tradition and commemorate her birthday by taking action for Transit Equity on February 4, 2019.

For more information: [labor4sustainability.org/transitequityday](http://labor4sustainability.org/transitequityday)

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