

Transit Stories

Tuesday May 18, 2021

Cynde Soto

Los Angeles, CA



Hi, my name is Cynde and I live in a beach town in Los Angeles County California. Riding transit allows me to live independently in the community, which is what we all want to do, right?

My wheelchair will not be able to get into a car or a taxi of any kind, so I rely on public transit. I ride the bus, the light rail and subway.

We have quite a few options here in LA County, which is a very good thing. However, the routes don't always go where I need to go. For instance, I live in a bit of a food desert. So in order for me to go grocery shopping once a week, I need to take at least two buses, and that can be very time-consuming and super frustrating for me. So I have to get to the bus stop, get the ride, then go a couple more blocks actually to the grocery store, so that could take me like half a day.

I just think that's ridiculous.

We should have more frequent bus scheduling, or maybe even just more buses period. One possible solution is "microtransit." Rides are shorter and we could actually get to our destinations that are vital to living in our community.

Another issue I have is traversing the county on sidewalks, the path of travel to bus stops. The cities in LA County have not been keeping up with their infrastructure so the sidewalks are either non-existent or broken.

Therefore if METRO could work with the cities, that problem could be eliminated.

I would also like to talk about bus shelters. Bus shelters are very important for everyone, really. And in LA County it gets pretty hot, so I need shade, as a lot of people do. I know that not all sidewalks can accommodate a shelter, however, I've seen some new, exciting designs for various shelters that can accommodate smaller space. The rectangular, traditional shelters don't really work for a lot of places, so that would be great.

Another problem that I have is overcrowding. The reason that we have overcrowding is there are not enough buses. And people don't really know when the bus or rail is going to arrive. So if we had real-time information about when our ride would be coming to us, it would be a lot less frustrating and people could better plan their trip out around town.

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National Campaign for
Transit Justice

Transit Stories

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I think the last situation that we have concerns safety and policing. There has been a lot of conversation about equity and safety, the statistics show that more people of brown skin are criminalized for breaking the rules. I don't think that's right. I believe that we need fewer armed safety personnel and more unarmed safety personnel. And what we really need is for security to have a different kind of mindset, a different education than "peace officers". What we need are ambassadors or security people with social work backgrounds or people who do outreach with our unhoused residents because they have the specific training to help people. They can give resources, but they don't have to have arms — it frightens people and I really don't think it's needed anyway.

So, let's get together our resources and our people and help America move.

transitjustice.org/transit-stories/cynde-soto

Transit Justice Principles

Abundant transit unlocks freedom of movement. But good transit is very scarce in the U.S. today. Americans Need Transit That Is ...

- **Equitable.** Transit investment must prioritize the needs of Black and brown people, people with low incomes, and people with disabilities.
- **Sustainable.** To avert severe climate change, models consistently show that some car trips must shift to transit.
- **Economically productive.** Better transit expands worker access to jobs, employer access to the workforce, customer access to businesses, and business access to a customer base.
- **Safe and accessible.** Transit investment should eliminate the full range of limitations and achieve broad-based safety and universal access.
- **Affordable.** Access to transit should never be contingent on one's ability to pay. Transit investment should establish programs that provide fare relief for everyone who needs it.

Every Tuesday, we will feature the first-hand experience of public transit riders from across the country in this short newsletter. From large cities to small towns, we will document the experiences of the millions of users of busses, trains, ferries and other forms of public transit in the US. Public transit is essential to our communities, to cooling the planet, to advancing equity. Transit is essential to our very lives.

This year there is a unique opportunity for the country to make an historic investment in public transit funding to help the country build back better. This story and all the others will be archived at transitjustice.org. For media inquiries, contact Doug Gordon, doug@upshiftstrategies.com.

TransitJustice.org

Published by the National Campaign for Transit Justice,
a project of Just Strategy



National Campaign for
Transit Justice