

Transit Stories

Tuesday May 4, 2021

Sonny Williams

Cincinnati, OH

I'm a 73-year-old disabled veteran with PTSD. After spending some time in different places around the country, I came back to Cincinnati. I use the Metro, our bus system, to get to my VA appointments, the grocery store, and the bank. I move around with a cane.

Even with the pandemic, I've never stopped riding the bus. I'll be riding one today. That's the only way I can get around. I don't drive. If it's raining or snowing, or if there's a storm, I take the bus even though I might have to stand in the rain. It's a lifeline for where I need to go.

We need public transit to be affordable for everyone. In Cincinnati last year we voted for taxes to run the Metro, and they're still raising the fares. The fares are going from \$1.75 to \$2.00, saying it's easier for people to pull \$2.00 out of their pocket than \$1.75, which is ridiculous. The cost of a fare card for an elderly person is going up \$5.00 a month. Rather than raising costs, we should keep fares down so everyone can take public transit as they need.

When I got out of the military, I lived in Chicago for a couple of years and worked as a security guard at a hospital, and I realized they had 24-hour transit. That helped me because sometimes I had to work very late, and I could get out and jump on the bus or subway and get home. In Cincinnati, having 24-hour transit would mean people could get to work any time. If someone has a shift where they get off at 2:30 in

the morning, they have to get a ride from somebody with a car, and if they don't have a ride with a friend or someone they know at work, they won't be able to keep that job. With 24-hour service, there'd be more job openings and people would have more possibility for an income to keep them from getting evicted or from going hungry.

Transit is about opportunity. Here, there are people who want to go to work in suburban areas they can't reach because they depend on someone with a car. If we had more transportation to suburbs there'd be more opportunities for people. That's why I support more investment in transit.

<https://transitjustice.org/transit-stories/sonny-williams/>

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

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