

Transit Stories

Tuesday July 6, 2021

Tejas Kotak

Atlanta, Georgia



(If this is ever read outloud, quick pronunciation guide for my name. Tejas like the word "advantageous.")

My name is Tejas Kotak and I live in Atlanta, Georgia.

I have relied on public transportation for over 8 years. I don't own a

car, so when I choose where to live, having reliable bus service nearby is crucial.

I am fortunate to be able to work from home, but I still rely on transit to purchase groceries, medical appointments, and visit parks. It is what connects me to my family in the suburbs, and my community around me.

In Atlanta, we can't afford to have more people driving cars, regardless of how efficient or clean they are. Traffic is already one of our biggest issues, and making driving the only option makes it worse, forcing us to dedicate more of our land to roads and parking instead of hospitals, housing, parks, or other uses that benefit society.

Owning a car would be a financial burden for me, and a constant safety issue as I often lack depth perception in my

vision. For my neighborhood, English Avenue, the case for transit rings deep when it comes to equity and the environment. The people who need transit the most are lower income black and brown communities like the one I live in. Improving transit and prioritizing more service is an important social justice issue we need to address.

During the pandemic, transit service cuts made my trips longer and harder. I had to make more transfers to get to where I was going, and had to wait longer for the train. It demonstrated how important it is not just to build transit, but how much more important it is to provide frequent and reliable service that can connect people to the places they need to go to live their lives.

transitjustice.org/transit-stories/tejas-kotak

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.

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