

Transit Stories

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Stacey Randecker

San Francisco, California



In the Bay Area, any loss of transit service threatens to upend my life, and my family's life. I commute on Caltrain and my two teenage children ride San Francisco

(SFMTA) buses to school. Without a stable source of guaranteed funding, I know both services are always at risk, and will never be used to their maximum potential.

My last job was with a company in Milpitas – a nearly two hour one-way trip using Caltrain and my bicycle from San Francisco to Silicon Valley. After a corporate lay-off, my ability to re-enter the labor force was threatened—first by the pandemic, now by Caltrain service. If Caltrain were to ever reduce operations, I would be unable to accept a job in Silicon Valley without buying a car. I'm unwilling to take that step, both because of the personal expense and the cost to our environment in carbon emissions.

With two kids in high school who participate in afterschool activities across the city, the city's bus system has become a lifeline for our family. SFMTA has been absolutely vital to avoiding the expense of a car, and for my kids to participate in activities that are important to them. However, it has become increasingly more difficult for them to use transit. My daughter can adapt to changes in transit schedules more easily, but my younger son faces more obstacles. Can you imagine a 14 yr-old athlete having to get up before 6 am just to get on transit, and then having to spend over an hour commuting, when his destination is only a 15 minute drive away? That's what my son goes through every time he commutes to his sports' practices. For them to commute to school it takes about an hour through Muni, San Francisco's railway system. We make it difficult for people to use transit, when the cheapest, fastest thing we should be able to do is take public transportation.

As a country, we spend billions of dollars every year building and maintaining highways and roads, but nowhere near enough supporting essential public transit services. I don't understand why a region with this much wealth can't have a seamless regional transit system. We need to have transit service that is reliable so people aren't forced to rely on cars.

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National Campaign for
Transit Justice

Transit Stories

New buses and trains don't matter unless we have them running more and arriving and moving often. Everytime we leave someone standing on a curb waiting for transit, we are pushing them to buy a car. The amount of money that is spent for an individual to buy, maintain, and fuel the vehicle is astronomical compared to how much they would spend on transit. I never would have made it during the pandemic if I also had to pay to sustain a vehicle.

To Speaker Nancy Pelosi, I urge you to support increased transit service for the Bay Area, and the nation as a whole.

transitjustice.org/transit-stories/stacey-randecker

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.

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