

Transit Stories

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Loa Angeles, California



I am a first-generation college student and attending Los Angeles Pierce College for the past three years, soon to be attending Cal State University Northridge, both being heavily commuter

schools. Before that, my whole life I've been taking public transit. It has been a very integral part of my life.

Recently, through LA's California Promise program, I've had the fee for my U-Pass waived for the past two years and that's been a huge help to me economically and financially. The U-Pass allowed me to take the subway, METRO bus, and local bus unlimitedly and it's taken the weight off in terms of cost. As I said then, public transit has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember and I will continue using it for the foreseeable future.

If I'm moving tomorrow and I'm not sure if I will stay there long, then I think that public transportation is the best way to get around in a city. I feel like anywhere that I visit I always make use of public transportation.

In the summer of 2019, I received a scholarship through Los Angeles Pierce College to visit Paris through the mayor's Young Ambassador program. Throughout our whole stay in Paris, we made heavy use of the public transportation system there. They're a very green and sustainable city always looking to cut the number of vehicles that are driven. I used their France Metro app, we all had our bus passes, and that's how we got around the city throughout those two weeks in Paris. I definitely think that an efficient public transportation system is useful in any major city or any city in the world.

From that experience, I noticed that the system in Paris is a little more connected. I feel like here it's more fragmented, you have to do a lot of walking between different stations. In Paris, it's a lot easier to find a bus route that runs frequently. That is the major difference, the frequency of the buses and metro. Because most people use public transit to travel to work, the city makes sure that they have a lot of lines available for everyone.

The fragmented transit system affects the way I take transit. I have to plan my trip to different places well over two

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hours in advance, because of the frequency of the buses. Sometimes, I get to work 30-40 minutes earlier than I should be there. Otherwise, I would say public transit has been pretty reliable. I always look up the bus times on the NextBus app. I would note that during the pandemic, a lot of lines were cut for some classes that I took. For instance, the bus didn't run on weekends. The reduced transit lines recently have been an issue.

Transit has really helped me in terms of saving money and getting to all the places that I need to go, whether that be doctor's visits or meetings with school counselors, taking the bus to my classes, or to work. Everything and anything I use public transit for. I wouldn't be able to do everything that I do without having the reliable transportation network that is in the San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles in general.

transitjustice.org/transit-stories/jacquelin-alcala

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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