

# National Campaign for Transit Justice

A project of Alliance for a Just Society

## Week Without Driving

### Building the Power for Transit, Biking, and Walking



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From **September 29th to October 5th**, the Week Without Driving offers us the opportunity to raise awareness of how essential public transportation is and to mobilize everyday riders, grassroots leaders, and decision makers to address transportation inequities by participating in the Week Without Driving challenge.

Week Without Driving challenges us to leave our cars at home for a week to see what it's like for the 1/3 of Americans who can't or don't drive. **Anyone can participate in the challenge**, whether as an individual, organization, or elected official. The Week Without Driving allows us to ask elected officials to support policies that invest in our public transit system.

## Background

In 2020, [Disability Mobility Initiative](#) began documenting the experiences of non-drivers in the State of Washington. In 2021 and 2022, they challenged elected officials and other decision-makers to a [Week Without Driving](#) – with profound effects on those who participated. In 2023, [America Walks](#) and Disability Mobility Initiative partnered to take Week Without Driving national.

Once again this year, the [National Campaign for Transit Justice](#) is joining forces with America Walks to draw even more attention to the Week Without Driving and call upon local, state, and national level officials to not only participate, but also advance policies that make our communities more transit friendly and accessible.

## Message Guidance

When posting on social media, writing newsletters, conducting interviews, or hosting events, here is some language you can use...

### Topline Message

**Transit is essential, particularly now in uncertain economic times. Transit drives economic growth, jobs, and opportunities.**

But for too long, our policymakers haven't prioritized funding for transit, choosing to spend the vast majority of our transportation dollars on roads. As a result, many transit agencies across the country are facing major budget shortfalls. And to make matters worse, the Trump Administration is even threatening to pull back funding that has already been given to states to fund transit projects.

**This September, we can raise awareness to the critical need for policymakers to focus on transit and to fully fund it by participating in the Week Without Driving challenge.** Week Without Driving challenges us to leave our cars at home for a week to see what it's like for the more than 30% of people in this country who can't or don't drive. Anyone can participate in the challenge - whether as an individual, organization, or elected official. **I/we am/are** doing this challenge because **[share your story]**.

By participating in Week Without Driving and raising our voices together about the need for better transit options, we can create a system that gets everyone where they need to go, regardless of ability, age, or income.

### Supporting Points

- Transit is a driver of economic growth, jobs, and opportunity. Nationally, tens of millions of people in the U.S.—from small rural towns to major urban centers—rely on public transit to

get to work every day, generating trillions of dollars in economic activity. Every dollar invested in transit offers a 5-to-1 return, and every \$1 billion invested in public transit produces 50,000 jobs. Transit agencies are often among the largest employers in their cities.

- Nearly a third of people living in the United States – people with disabilities, young people, seniors, and people who can't afford cars or gas - don't drive. We must fund and improve transportation options to support their mobility and independence.
- The climate crisis is not coming; it is here now, and it's getting worse by the day. We've seen it all around us on a near daily basis. It is impacting our economy and nearly every aspect of our daily lives. Investing in public transit is one of the top ways we can help address the climate crisis on the needed scale.
- The transportation sector is the largest source of U.S. climate pollution, and 80% of transportation emissions come from the [cars and trucks on our roads](#). It's one of the only major sectors where emissions are still [rising](#).
- For far too long, policymakers have prioritized highways and cars over public transit. This has devastating impacts not only on the climate crisis but on the budgets of local transit agencies like ours.
- Policymakers' investment in transit would be a win-win: it would benefit our economy and boost our efforts to address the climate crisis.
- We will use the Week Without Driving to raise our collective voices and ensure that policymakers at the local, state, and national levels hear us and invest in transit.

## Inviting Elected Officials to Participate

Below is a template that explains what the Week Without Driving Challenge is. It offers different ways for elected officials to participate.

Dear **NAME -**

Thank you for your leadership. We need it now more than ever.

As you know, transit is essential for our community, particularly now in uncertain economic times. Transit drives economic growth, jobs, and opportunities.

Unfortunately, many transit agencies, including many in our state, are facing major budget shortfalls. And to make matters worse, the Trump Administration is even threatening to pull back funding that has already been given to states to fund transit projects.

This is why we ask that you join us in a Week Without Driving challenge this September.

Week Without Driving challenges us to leave our cars at home for a week to experience what life is like for the third of Americans who can't or don't drive. By participating in Week Without Driving and raising our voices about better transit options, we can create a system that gets everyone where they need to go, regardless of ability, age, or income.

Given the grave threat to transit at this moment, our goal is to make this year's "A Week Without Driving" the largest ever.

Sadly, we know that for too many a week without driving is impossible. And that is the point of this action. If doing a week is not possible for you, you can join us in multiple ways. You can:

- **Go online /or call to try to find a route via public transit to where you need to go.** How long did it take you to get the information? How long would the trip be compared to driving? **Post your experience on social media** with a message about how we need to invest to have a viable, robust, dependable public transit system.
- **Organize a ride with other elected officials and riders** to travel to a key worksite, school, government seat, or hospital by public transit and document the trip on social media and in the press.
- **Put out a challenge to your constituents** to join you in attempting a week or a day or even one trip by public transit.
- **Join a constituent and accompany them on their ride to work.** Document your experience on social media, highlighting that transit is essential and worthy of public investment.

If you're able to join us or have any questions, please contact **XXX**.

Sincerely,

**XXX**

## Writing An Op-Ed on The Week Without Driving

An op-ed during the Week Without Driving can spotlight the daily realities of transit riders and urge local leaders to invest in public transportation and pedestrian-safe infrastructure. Please work with your organization to know what to prioritize and ask for. If you are not focusing on environmental causes, please change the language to something more related to your work. Other factors include economic benefits, jobs, and more.

### 1. Introduction

- Hook: Start with a compelling message, fact or anecdote about transit / or the Week without Driving.
- Lay out the problem: lack of funding in transit.

- Thesis statement: Why investing in transit will help your local community and help combat the climate crisis.
- 2. Main Argument/Context**
  - Talk about how taking action - like the Week Without Driving - can help raise awareness about the problem
  - Provide background about transit in your area.
  - Provide background about how investing in transit will help your local economy.
  - Provide background on how investing in transit will help address the climate crisis.
- 3. Personal Perspective or Story**
  - Share a personal anecdote or experience about the Week Without Driving / or about a person who needs local transit
- 4. Call-to-Action**
  - Call on leaders to invest in transit.
  - Talk about what that investment could do.
- 5. Conclusion**
  - Summarize your main points in a sentence or two.
  - End with a strong closing statement that reinforces your argument and leaves a lasting impression on the reader.

The op-ed should be around 700-800 words.

## Proclaiming Week Without Driving Template

This is a document to help you understand the proclamations. Please work with your organization to know what to prioritize and ask for. If you are not focusing on environmental causes, please change the language to something more related to your work. Other factors include economic benefits, jobs, and more.

### Resolution Proclaiming Sept. 29th to October 5th, 2025 Week Without Driving

WHEREAS, access to mobility is a fundamental part of *health, safety and community connection*, allowing **INSERT JURISDICTION NAME HERE** to reach education and employment opportunities, medical services, shopping, recreation, and visit friends and family, and is one of the state's six transportation system policy goals, including investing public dollars to improve the movement of people throughout **INSERT JURISDICTION NAME HERE**; and

WHEREAS, as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates the cost of owning a car is approximately 72 cents a mile, with average household spending on transportation reaching \$10,961 a year in 2021, many people cannot afford the cost of a car, and nearly a third of the people residing in the US do not have a driver's license, either because of their age or a condition that does not allow them to drive; and

WHEREAS, public transportation and a strong network of sidewalks and bike paths aren't available in every community, making it much more difficult to get around, visit family and friends, and take care of everyday tasks for those who cannot or do not drive; and

WHEREAS, improvements in walking and bike paths can improve alternate forms of mobility in communities across **INSERT CITY/COUNTY** and our state, and public driver education initiatives can help educate drivers to have patience and understanding for those traveling by means other than a vehicle; and

WHEREAS, transportation represents the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, and in order to meet our state's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, we must reduce emissions in our transportation sector; and

WHEREAS, going a week without driving is great way to understand how we can improve our current transportation system to better meet the needs of **INSERT RESIDENTS OF CITY/STATE/COUNTY HERE** and improve and enhance transportation options such as transit, light rail, biking, and walking pathways as key strategies in our decarbonization efforts;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, **NAME, TITLE OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL HERE**, do hereby proclaim September 30-October 6, 2023 as Week Without Driving, and I encourage all people in our **INSERT CITY/STATE/COUNTY HERE** to join me in this special observance.

## Examples from Week Without Driving 2024

### New York

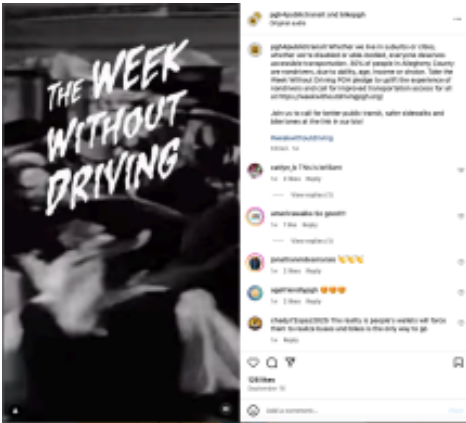
#### New Yorkers for Transportation Equity:

Coalition for Economic Justice held a press conference at the Main Transit Center in Buffalo on October 2nd. They used the event to draw attention around a statewide push to pass Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) legislation. This legislation sets a bold but achievable target to reduce the total annual VMT in New York State by 20% by 2050. In doing so, this legislation would channel investments away from inequitable and polluting highways toward more frequent public transit, more accessible streets for walking and cycling, new greenway trails, and more.

New York Communities For Change is holding a press conference in Canarsie. (Need Report and Pictures)

## Pennsylvania

### Pittsburghers for Public Transit (PPT)



PPT hosted a local roundtable with the AARP, BikePittsburgh, Access Mob, among others for local organizations and electeds, including the Allegheny County Executive Sara Innamarato and Pittsburgh Mayor Ed Gainey, to take a Week Without Driving pledge and showcase stories of non-drivers. The campaign demand centered on ensuring that Allegheny County commits to a plan for service restoration and expansion. PPT showcased the Week's activities by creating a website and a creative Instagram post to draw attention to the effort. PPT also worked with transit advocates across the state, including Philly Transit Riders Union, (others?) to host [www.weekwithoutdrivingpa.org](http://www.weekwithoutdrivingpa.org), and is centered on moving the Pennsylvania Governor and Lieutenant Governor on increasing transit funding.

## Maryland

### Central Maryland Transportation Alliance (CMTA)

CMTA coordinated work with one of their key partners, the No Boundaries Coalition, to take part in WWD activities they called "Put Your Seat Where Your Mouth Is". This involved pairing up transit riders with elected officials that will then fill out a follow up questionnaire and 'report card' to grade their experience. They were able to secure commitments from key elected officials, such as Baltimore City Council President Nick Mosby, Baltimore City Councilman James Torrence, and Maryland State Delegate Robbyn Lewis. No Boundaries will be hosting a Listening Session with elected officials on October 10th to build momentum on their local campaign on securing more funds for transit expansion and operations.

Pictured here is Baltimore City Council Member and Democratic Nominee for City Council President with Bemí Byrd from the No Boundaries Coalition.

Baltimore City Councilmember and Democratic Nominee for City Council President [@BemíByrd](#) participated in Bemí Byrd with the No Boundaries Coalition's "Put Your Seat Where Your Mouth Is" ride along challenge.

On Monday a representative of the Mayor did too.

[@BemíByrd](#) [@CokeCoke](#) [@CokeCoke](#) · 6m  
This morning I rode the bus to work with organizers from the No Boundaries Coalition. For Baltimore to become a world class city, we need great public transportation. People need to be able to get to work or school on time.  
Let's build the Red Line and invest in us!



## North Carolina

### Bike Durham

Bike Durham and local allied organizations are utilizing the Week Without Driving to draw attention for a \$115 million ballot referendum that would be





used for sidewalk improvements and street improvements to make accessing transit systems safer and allow for more non-vehicular transport. They built momentum for their week of activities by organizing a ride-along with Durham County Commissioner Mike Lee and at-large City Council Member Carl Rist on September 20th.



All of Bike Durham's activities were married with social media posts to draw more attention to the issue. They were also successful in having the City of Durham pass a proclamation supporting the Week Without Driving. All of Bike Durham's activities were married with social media posts to draw more attention to the issue. To link their local work to the national push for more transit operating funding, Bike Durham members met with Rep. Valerie Foushee to highlight her co-sponsorship of the Stronger Communities Through Better Transit Act.

### Sustain Charlotte

Members and leaders with Sustain Charlotte did a ride along event with a Mecklenburg County Commissioner as a way to draw attention to a 1 cent sales tax ballot referendum that would be used for multi-modal investments.

### Down Home North Carolina

On September 10th, Down Home NC members packed a Kerr Area Transportation Authority (KARTS) Meeting to secure commitments from KARTS Board Members to participate in the Week Without Driving to draw attention to the difficulties families face in rural parts of Granville, Vance, and Franklin Counties when accessing public transit. This action was a part of Down Home NC's campaign to secure an additional \$1.5 million for the KARTS budget to expand transportation access, especially in rural locales. Although Down Home NC members were unable to secure commitment from any of the seven KARTS Board members to participate, the action further solidified Down Home NC members' motivation in the ongoing campaign to expand KARTS' service. Down Home NC members are also working to schedule a meeting with Rep. Don Davis to secure his support for the Stronger Communities Through Better Transit Act.



## Ohio

### Move OH:

The focus of all of Move OH's Week Without Driving activities centered on drawing attention to the need to fund and expand the state's transit system in the 2025 state budget session and the



essential role that transit plays for workers and people with disabilities. Move OH coordinated work with 28 organizations across the state and utilized the activities to really deepen and expand their relationships with disability rights groups and unions across the state. Sally Fish, Executive Director of the Toledo Independent Living Center, spoke about how Amtrak in Toledo was a game changer in terms of intercity mobility. The Ohio Education Association (OEA) and the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT) produced video testimonials of the issues families face involving frequency and dependability of local bus service. In Cleveland, Move OH, developed a coalition table made up of Bike Cleveland, Jobs with Justice, the Clevelanders for Public Transit, LEAP (an independent living organization), and the local chapter of NAACP to do ride-alongs with Cleveland City Council Members Rebecca Maurer and Jenny Spencer, Ohio State Representatives Mike Skindell and Juania Brent, and member of the regional transit authority. The work in Cleveland was echoed in other parts of the state including ride-alongs that occurred with Columbus City Council Members with Shannon Hardin and Lourdes Barrosos de Padilla.

## Michigan

### Detroit People's Platform:

Detroit People's Platform held a ride-along on October 3rd with Michigan State Senator Stephanie Chang. Senator Chang is a key member of the Michigan Senate Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Securing her support and leadership on transit funding issues is crucial for their statewide work. Detroit People's Platform also held a ride along with Congressperson Shri Thanedar to draw attention to his support and co-sponsor of the Stronger Communities Through Better Transit Act.

## California

### Move LA/California:

Move LA coordinated the SoCal Transit Week which involved a vast array of activities to draw attention to their demands involving expanding transit funding and expansion of free-fare programs. They previewed the week's activities with a kick-off press conference on September 26th with LA County Supervisors and Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins. Move LA facilitated over twenty events throughout the week, including a Transit Scavenger Hunt which asked people to complete unique transit challenges in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties, the 2nd Annual Clean Mobility Forum, which was an all day event with key elected officials and transit agency representatives to discuss how transit is crucial when it comes to the our air quality, and ride-alongs with area mayors.



## Washington DC

### Greater Greater Washington:

Greater Greater Washington was the lead organization in the DC Transportation Equity Network for Week Without Driving activities and developed an interactive website to track commitments that they were able to garner from local electeds by highlighting the pictures of electeds in color who said yes. The ride-alongs were focused on D.C.'s busiest bus corridors to highlight routes that should receive priority treatment in DC's Transportation Budget in 2025. Greater Greater

Washington was able to secure commitments from a wide array of elected officials and agency representatives to participate in ride-alongs including Sharon Kershbaum, Director of the DC Department of Transportation, DC Council Members Brianne Nadeau, Matthew Frumin, and Charles Allen, and Dr. Tracey Hadden Lo, Principal Director of WMATA.

