



**5 PROJECTS
ANY COMMUNITY CAN DO
TO IMPROVE THE
TRANSIT EXPERIENCE
IN 5 EASY STEPS**

ioby

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IT'S ABOUT HOW WE SPEND OUR TIME GETTING AROUND

For many of us, the bus or subway provides a critical link from home to work, school, and family and friends. Yes, transit makes enormous contributions to a city, reducing congestion by keeping cars off the road and helping to keep the air cleaner. But, taking a bus or train also benefits us personally, inserting short walks into our days for a healthier lifestyle, and connecting us socially to our drivers and fellow passengers. And every trip starts with one step in our own neighborhood.

For several years, transit rides have increased 1.4% annually. But despite an increase in use, transit management and service has not changed much at all. Across the country, our bus routes often look exactly as they did 60 years ago, even though our offices, homes, schools, shopping and destinations have grown in completely different directions. And our bus stops, often just a metal stick cemented in the sidewalk, provide no more shelter than they used to. Technology has made it easier for people to plan their trips based on schedules, but the majority of people across the country still grapple with the realities of long waits and delays. People who rely on transit the most—those with disabilities, seniors, and families on a tight budget—often bear the brunt of these service inadequacies. All these forces, in sum, reinforce the perception that transit is second best.

It doesn't have to be this way. The experience of taking transit can be enlivening, an energizing highlight of the day. Instead of waiting for someone else to revolutionize our train and bus systems, we are interested in making change now. We think that riders, those of us who take transit every single day, who know our daily routes and how they fit in the entire system inside and out, have some pretty darn good ideas on improving the everyday experience of our trips. Some riders serenade their bus drivers, others bring picnics to share, some garden while they wait for the train, and others leave a book to borrow a book before hopping on their ride home.

Okay, I get it. Transit could be better. But what am I supposed to do about it? I'm just one rider. Shouldn't the transit authority be the one to make these changes?

Small-scale projects are no substitute for service improvements, which would make transit better for all. Of course, our elected officials should be funding the large-scale improvements our systems need. But we can make substantial—if incremental—changes to make our trips more convenient, comfortable, and fun. And small actions show that transit doesn't have to be a daily grind. Each transit trip we take has value, and the ways we trick out our trips show transit agencies, and the rest of the community, that there are constituents who care and are invested in frequent, efficient, reliable, predictable transit. For us riders, transit has never been a second choice, it's the path from our own doorstep to the rest of the city.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

TransitCenter



HOW TO THINK BEYOND THE BENCH

A collection of ideas for innovative seating in public space from Perry Sponseller, Jason Johns, Old City Millwork Memphis, Aurash Kharwazad, DO Tank, Archimania, Omaha by Design, Paige Johnson, Creative Alliance, Baltimore Southeast Community Development Corporation, Red Swing Project, and more.

1. Turn Your Bus Stop Into a Playground.

Paige Johnson has chronicled the years-long rich history of swingsets as urban interventions, from subway swings to busstop swings, to swings in parking spaces and swings under trestles, on Play Scapes. The Red Swing Project, which started in Austin, Texas, in 2007, has a DIY guide to creating your own playground.

2. Turn Signs Into Seating.

Baltimore got an extremely literal bus stop sign that reads BUS in 14-foot tall letters after the Southeast Community Development Corporation and Creative Alliance hosted a design workshop for residents of the Highlandtown neighborhood. They wanted to make a statement for their arts and cultural district and transform the dull experience of waiting for the bus into something entertaining, playful and interactive.

3. Make Furniture Any Volunteer Can Assemble.

When Memphis entrepreneurs and urbanists decided to temporarily reopen the Tennessee Brewery in April 2014, they needed to work quickly and on a limited budget. Jason Johns at the Old City Millwork created a design for furniture made from pallets that volunteers could assemble. They designed something comfortable for the masses that would encourage hanging out. The sides are made from outdoor grade plywood and the seat and back are made from 2'x4's. They used a CNC machine to cut the chairs so they could get 8 from a single sheet of plywood, and to pre-drill holes.

4. Bring the Comforts of Home Into the Public.

In Los Angeles, the Department of Transportation transformed parking spaces near bus stops into seating areas. In Omaha, a design firm created a comfortable living room inside a bus shelter on Omaha Gives! Day organized by the Omaha Community Foundation.

More resources:

<http://www.redswingproject.org/>

<http://ilovememphisblog.com/2012/10/play-on-the-south-main-swing-set-while-it-lasts/>

<http://www.play-scapes.com/play-history/a-brief-history-of-the-urban-swing-movement/>

<http://www.citylab.com/commute/2014/08/gets-a-giant-bus-stop-shaped-like-the-words-bus-stop/375823/>

<http://www.ilovememphisblog.com/2014/05/tennessee-brewery-untapped/>





David Nelson, Transportation Project Associate at PPS, is a transportation professional, physical planner, and urban designer from Nebraska. His focus is on public space, transportation and behavior, and he works on projects including form based codes and public space programming. He was the project manager for the Federal Highway Administration's Context Sensitive Solutions Clearinghouse. Before PPS, David worked at the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University as a transit and biked research and graphic designer for the New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Research Center and the New Jersey Safe Routes to School Resource Center, and encouraged walkable, bikeable projects at the City of Omaha Planning Department.

HOW TO MAKE A CULTURAL BUS STOP ACTIVATION

by David Nelson & David Leyzerovsky, Project for Public Spaces



David Leyzerovsky is part of the PPS Transportation Team, working as Transportation Fellow. His primary responsibilities include helping promote the 2014 Pro Walk/ Pro Bike/ Pro Place Conference, and maintaining and updating the Federal Highway Administration's Context Sensitive Solution Site. David has also worked on projects at PPS that promoted street typologies and form based codes. Before PPS, David completed his bachelor's in history at the University of Michigan, interned at the NYC Department of City Planning. Now at Hunter College David has focused on fostering successful public places and walkable communities supported by a vibrant network of transportation options.

A cultural bus stop activation is a days-long temporary transformation of a mundane transit stop into an exciting place filled with amenities and cultural programming. Nimbly connecting neighborhood institutions to transit reminds residents of the community's assets. Temporary installations are quick, can be lent for free and avoid lengthy permitting processes.

STEP 1. Choose Your Stop

Be sure to pick a bus stop that has riders, so you have people to engage. Contact the transit authority to find out where there are high volumes of boardings and long wait times. Consider your goals. For example, do you want to address a site-specific issue, like reducing graffiti? If so, pick a site that demonstrates the issue simply. Be sure to address right-of-way and liability up front.

STEP 2: Engage the Neighborhood & the Riders

Let people know what's happening and get them excited. Use signs, websites, or lead workshops to spark ideas about uses and activities that riders want. Riders or neighborhood residents and businesses may have some incredible ideas or materials that can be donated, borrowed, or sponsored.

STEP 3. Partner with Cultural Institutions

Marketing agencies have designed many bus stops with engaging activities geared toward advertising, but activations should be about more than just selling goods and services. Reach out to cultural institutions, especially those served by the bus stop, to see how they can bring their programming to the stop. Consider some of these examples for inspiration:

- A local library could donate a book cart or install a Little Free Library.
- A YMCA could lead riders in stretching or exercise classes.
- A historical society could host a trivia game or a scavenger hunt.
- In Pittsburgh, Highmark Community Blue heated bus shelters in winter.
- In Victoria BC, the zoo installed an interactive display in the bus shelter to show kids (and adults) what the world looks like to an insect.

STEP 4. Activate Your Cultural Bus Stop

Make a plan, make sure all the materials and programs are coordinated and confirmed. Double check that you have permission from the authorities. Then put everything in place, and spend one or a few days hanging out at the bus stop!

STEP 5. Record Your Impact

Take before and after measurements on Placemaking Indicators (e.g., the number of people smiling, the number of conversations between strangers, people's satisfaction and feeling of safety with the space, etc.). Write a blog or short report about not only what the activation was, but also how it followed a bottom-up Placemaking process. Finally, get local media there to help spread the idea that transit can be a fun and convenient form of transportation in your community.

List of Supplies & Estimate Budget

- Donated or borrowed materials specific to programming and signs, paint, chalk, etc. (\$0 - \$200)

Approximate budget and recommended time of year

- Spring or Fall is best
- Summer if the intervention includes cooling, e.g. cool beverages, misting stations, etc.
- Winter if the intervention includes heating, e.g. space heaters, hot lamps, etc.

Estimated Time Needed

- 40-120 hours to select a site and coordinate programming partners and materials (process should be started at least 2 months prior to installation)

Who Should Be Involved

- Transit Agency
- Public Works Department (or in some places the Transportation or Parks Departments manages bus stops)
- Bus Bench or Shelter advertising franchise holder
- Neighborhood cultural institutions

More Resources

- Thinking Beyond the Station <http://www.pps.org/reference/thinking-beyond-the-station/>
- Public Participation Tools for Transit Dependent Communities <http://www.pps.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Tools-for-Transit-Dependent-Communities.pdf>
- Lighter Quicker Cheaper
 - <http://www.pps.org/reference/lighter-quicker-cheaper-a-low-cost-high-impact-approach/>
 - <http://www.pps.org/reference/lighter-quicker-cheaper-2-2/>

HOW TO APPLY PLAZA PRINCIPLES TO TRANSIT

by Laura Hansen, Neighborhood Plaza Partnership



Laura Hansen is the Executive Director of Neighborhood Plaza Partnership, a new initiative of the Horticultural Society of New York, providing resources and assistance to neighborhood plaza managers across New York City. From 2003 to 2013, Laura served as Director of the City Life Program for The J. M. Kaplan Fund where she was responsible for awarding grants to non-profit organizations working to improve the common infrastructure of public life: the parks, waterfronts, plazas, and streets of New York City. As a co-founder of Place Matters (a project of the Municipal Art Society and City Lore), Laura helped pioneer a multi-disciplinary approach to documenting and preserving the city's cultural landscape.

By applying best practices in plaza programming to transit hubs, you can transform what is crowded space most people try to rush through into a place that's a center of information and social interaction, where riders can do all your daily shopping at once, benefit from other commuters' neighborhood expertise, and support local merchants' thriving businesses.

STEP 1. Identify a Stage Near Your Transit Hub

Find a space near a bus stop, a train station, bicycle parking, carsharing, or a park & ride with lots of commuter eyes and feet. (Not too many eyes and feet or you might create a bottleneck!) Ideally, use an existing public plaza or park. Get permission. Find out what kinds of street activity permits you may need. If you plan on using space owned by a transit agency, alert agency staff to your plans and comply with regulations.

STEP 2. Build Community & Relationships for Long Term Impact

Define what kind of help you need (i.e., organizers, flyer distributors, website designers, donated materials, membership lists, businesses, civic leaders). If you are an existing organization, reach out to allied local groups—tenant associations, co-op boards, social service and cultural organizations, schools, libraries, health-care providers or any other organized group active in your community. Share your idea and ask for help. If you are an individual, get some friends together to create a critical mass, and then reach out to those same organizations. **Expert Tip!** When you're building community, the value of face time (meetings and phone calls) and old-fashioned shoe leather organizing cannot be over-estimated. Mass emails may feel efficient, but their impact pales in comparison to human touch.



STEP 3. Create a Shared Vision

Who uses this transit hub? What would make it more convenient for them? Make quick improvements, but also plant the seeds for future change. Consider the following to make a plaza more

- **Pedestrian Friendly:** Build, draw or otherwise demonstrate physical interventions that create more room & better flow.
- **Convenient:** Map errand options within a 5-block radius, including round-trip time from the Hub; add tips, short-cuts and endorsements from residents, e.g., "I love Smithtown Bakery's hot cross buns at Easter!"
- **Cost-Saving:** Work with local businesses to offer discounts during the activation period.
- **Efficient:** List transit options within a 5-block radius, including transfer points and travel tips.
- **Informative:** Work with local businesses to sponsor a short-term free wifi pilot – giving the sponsors splash-page coverage.
- **Healthy:** Create a pop-up farmers market, cooking demo, nutrition advice, exercise class incorporating the bus stop, etc.
- **Neighborly:** Create a tip-sheet on "How to be on a First Name Basis with Your Local Merchants."
- **Interactive:** Ask commuters how the Hub could work better for them; what kinds of goods and services would they like to see?
- **Participatory:** Recruit future activists.

STEP 4. Make Some Noise

Notify residents, businesses, commuters, and transit workers. Make sure your elected officials know of your plans, and do everything you can to get them there for the demonstration and give them a role. They are powerful allies, especially if there are more permanent aspects to your vision. Alert the media with a short press advisory 2-3 days before the event, and a press release with quotes from elected officials, business owners, and a commuter right after the event. Don't forget to include neighborhood bloggers and transit or other issue-specific websites (e.g., Streetsblog) to your media list. Video everything and get releases.

STEP 5. Keep the Momentum Going

Now that you have some momentum, don't be afraid to be ambitious. Transit hubs work better when there is adjacent public space to improve safety and flow, attract foot traffic to local businesses, provide a meeting place, offer seating, and create a frame for creative community-building projects like yours. Think long-term. If you have a public space (plaza or park) near your hub, how can it contribute to your vision on a regular basis? What kinds of physical improvements would help? If you do not have such a public space, can you create one?

Who Should Be Involved

Transit Agency
Public Works Department (or in some places the Transportation or Parks Departments manages bus stops)
Bus Bench or Shelter advertising franchise holder
Neighborhood cultural institutions

More Resources

NYC DOT Plaza Program
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pedestrians/nyc-plaza-program.shtml>

City of Los Angeles People Street
<http://peoplest.lacity.org/>



HOW TO MAKE TRANSIT HUBS SAFER FOR EVERYONE USING INTERSECTION REPAIR

by Mike Lydon

Mike Lydon is a Principal of The Street Plans Collaborative. Mike collaborated with Andres Duany and Jeff Speck in writing The Smart Growth Manual, honored by Planetizen as one of the top ten planning books of 2010. Mike is also the creator and primary author of the The Open Streets Project and Tactical Urbanism: Short-Term Action, Long-Term Change Vol.1 and Vol.2. Mike edited and co-developed the recently published Mercado: Lessons from 20 Markets across South America and is currently writing a full-length book about Tactical Urbanism with Tony Garcia, to be published by Island Press in the spring of 2015. Mike is founding member of the New England Chapter of the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU), a Board Member for CNU New York, and a steering committee member of the Next Generation of New Urbanists, and he currently serves on an Executive Committee for The Harbor Ring, is an advisor to the Bicycle Coalition of Maine, and sits on the Board of the Center for a New American Dream. Mike received a B.A. in American Cultural Studies from Bates College and a Masters in Urban Planning from the University of Michigan. Mike is a CNU-Accredited Professional and encourages you to trade four wheels for two.

Transit Hubs are busy intersections where train lines, bus lines, cars, taxis, pedestrians and bicycles often meet. Here's how to make sure those who depend on transit the most (the very young, the very old and families on tight budgets) can get across intersections safely.

STEP 1. Watch the People Flow

Are pedestrians racing across a specific intersection? Do people seem anxious or hurried in certain spots? Take notes. Then, draw the intersection and mark the areas that seem the most unsafe. In some cities, you may be able to find crash data online to identify common problem areas.

- <http://www.wnyc.org/story/nyc-opens-traffic-crash-data-finally/>
- <http://youarehere.cc/p/bicycle-accidents/sanfrancisco>

STEP 2. Build a Team

Reach out to a diverse group of riders and find people to work with you. Does your area have an advocacy group for cyclists or transit riders? Is there a neighborhood or community association nearby? Pay special attention to civic institutions like schools and libraries. Build a group of people to help you repair the intersection.

STEP 3. Make a Plan

You have a lot of options. Consider using highly visible orange cones to extend the sidewalk and shorten the distance pedestrians have to cross from one sidewalk to another. In Hamilton, Ontario, a group put daisies in the orange cones to signal that their aim was to make the area friendlier to pedestrians. Some groups will use washable chalk paint to repaint crosswalk stripes to make them easier for drivers to see. Others use rolls of reflective and slip resistant traffic tape, or even paint white stripes on black carpet and roll out temporary "crosswalk carpets." Install buckets with crosswalk flags to make pedestrians more visible to cars.

STEP 4. REPAIR!

Start early in the morning. Have lots of volunteers on hand. Designate adults to act as crossing guards wearing safety vests to make sure everyone is visible and safe. Make sure one volunteer is there to video and take photos. Tweet at, or call the local press and neighborhood bloggers to cover the story.

STEP 5. Measure & Share Success

The purpose of tactical urbanism is to demonstrate the way public space could be used differently with a short-term demonstration project. Decide what you want to document (e.g., shortening the length of time it takes for an elderly pedestrian to cross the street, how motor vehicle car speed was reduced, the number of positive feedback you get from drivers and riders measuring by thumbs up, honking, texting, tweeting or in person survey) and then share the results with your team, the local press, the community board or city council.

More resources:

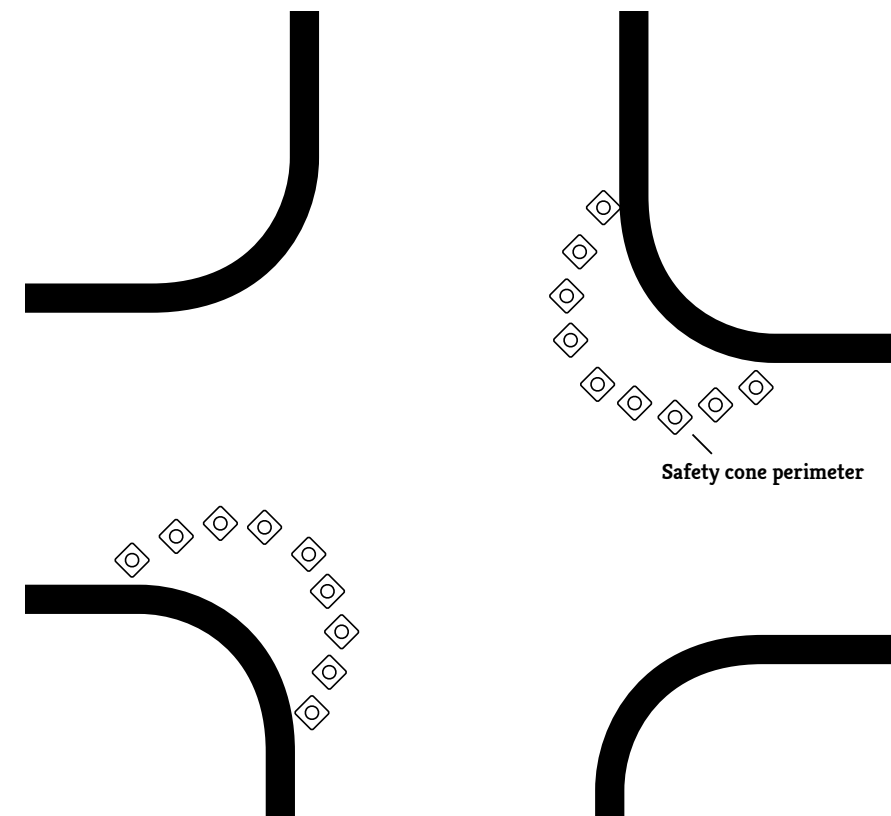
- <http://www.streetplans.org/>
- http://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/tactical_urbanism_vol_2_final
- http://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/tactical_urbanism-hamilton_report_f
- <https://www.ioby.org/project/crosswalk-flags>

Who should be involved:

- A city planner
- Someone from the local community
- Concerned parents / citizens
- An advocate for cycling or pedestrian safety

Supply List and Estimated Costs:

- Orange Cones - \$150
- Orange Safety Vests - \$30
- Washable Temporary Paint - \$100
- Food for volunteers - \$100





HOW TO CREATE A NETWORK OF “SHARING STOPS” FOR EXPANDED TRANSIT ACCESS

by By Nina Misuraca Ignaczak, Shareable

Not everyone who needs transit lives within walking distance of a transit stop. Many, including the elderly, need a little help to get to the bus or train. And as transit-oriented development drives up real estate prices in many areas, transit access is increasingly becoming an equity issue. Building a network of “Sharing Stops” to expand transit access can increase ridership while also increasing social capital in a neighborhood. Here’s how to get started.

Nina Misuraca Ignaczak is a devoted, lifelong resident of the beautiful and battered Detroit area. She is fascinated by the intersection of people and place, and inspired by those who work to make communities shine. She has worked with local governments, nonprofits, community groups and small businesses on sustainable development and civic engagement projects, and also writes stories about community for shareable.net.

STEP 1. Pick Your Stop

You’ll need to select a transit stop that is friendly to “Last Mile” problems, with amenities for car and bike parking, good pedestrian access, comfortable waiting areas and frequent service. You’ll also want to find a stop that is operating below capacity, so there is room for extra ridership.

STEP 2. Look Just Beyond the Catchment Area.

Look just outside of the 0.5-mile catchment area, up to 2 miles out, for “Sharing Stop” opportunities. Identify natural points of neighborhood congregation like senior centers, recreation centers, office buildings, and apartment buildings. A “Sharing Stop” does not need to be tied to a single location; are there single-family residential areas that might work for a car share? Go to these places, talk to people about their needs and ask if they would be willing to organize a “Sharing Stop.”

STEP 3. Identify the Best Sharing Technology.

Pick a pilot for your “Sharing Stop” based on what you’ve found out about local needs and conditions, and identify the best technology for serving these users.

If you are serving...

- The elderly?
- Young, active professionals?
- Families?
- Young students?

Consider using...

- A vanpool or a tiny car
- A bike share or a bike valet
- An informal car sharing or rideshare
- A walking school bus or biking bus

STEP 4. Test and Iterate.

You may start by piloting a pop-up event, where people can try the service and give rapid feedback. Be prepared with surveys asking people how likely they are to use the service, any difficulties or obstacles encountered. Running multiple beta-tests and soft-launches to work out the kinks is advised. Eventually, you can build up to a network of “Sharing Stops” operated by the people who use them.

STEP 5. Communicate

You will need to provide a way for people to communicate, access schedules, air their concerns and tap into the network; a high-tech solution like a shared blog, email listserve or Facebook group may work, or a low-tech one like a community bulletin board may be the right approach.

More Resources:

- <http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/media/uploads/gl/RealEstateImpacts.pdf>
- http://publictransport.about.com/od/Transit_Planning/a/Walking-Distance-To-Transit.htm
- <http://www.psmag.com/environment/is-driving-one-tiniest-cars-world-in-your-future-42688/?>
- http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/programs/promote_bikeshare.cfm
- <http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-run-a-bike-valet>
- <http://www.shareable.net/blog/diy-car-sharing-how-to-start-your-own-car-sharing-program>
- <http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-carpool-with-strangers>
- <http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-create-a-walking-school-bus-in-your-neighborhood>
- Shareable’s collection of how-to guides: <http://www.shareable.net/how-to-share>
- Shareable’s sharing economy policy guide for urban leaders: <http://www.shareable.net/blog/new-report-policies-for-shareable-cities>
- Shareable’s weekly sharing newsletter: <http://www.shareable.net/signup-for-shareables-weekly-sharing-economy-e-newsletter>
- Resources for local sharing movement organizers: <http://www.shareable.net/sharing-cities/learn>
- Shareable’s sharing & new economy event calendar: <http://www.shareable.net/events>

Who should be involved?

- Transit users
- Transit agency
- Neighborhood organizations

Supply List & Estimated Costs

Supplies and costs depend entirely on the technology used.

- Vans: Costs may range from \$0 for donated vans to \$50,000 + for new vans plus maintenance and fuel costs
- Bikeshare systems: Costs may range from \$0 for a DIY system to millions for a professional system.
- Informal Rideshares: \$0
- Tiny Car: Costs range from \$16,000- \$40,000 per car plus maintenance and fuel costs
- Best Time of Year: People are unlikely to deviate from their usual way of doing things during busy times of year or inclement weather, so you might want to shoot for summertime.