

amount of urban space required by roadways and parking facilities, will be dramatically amplified.

Implementation of Bike Racks and Baby Stroller Storages on all Buses

Families usually need sufficient room for their belongings. Baby strollers are a common item carried into buses, but take up part of the walkway room. Sometimes, strollers are placed on a seat that could be used by a passenger. Installing baby stroller storages in all buses will leave extra room in the walkway, will not take up an extra seat, and most importantly, could be used for other storage such as groceries, backpacks, or luggage.

Bike racks on buses are important assets to our community because they provide bike riders a faster and more convenient way to get around town. Unfortunately, Capital Metro does not offer bike racks on all routes. The installation of bike racks will encourage bike ridership on buses and better the quality of transportation since a bike rider's travel time will improve.

Installation of Shelters on most Bus Stops

People who take the bus daily often wait at bus stops for extended periods of time. Passengers range from the elderly and the handicapped, to a family with young children. Waiting outside with no shelter against weather such as the sun or rain is an unnecessary burden on the comfort and health of Capital Metro passengers. Average transfers are twelve minutes, but some bus stops with no shelter take up to forty-five minutes or more to arrive. For the sake of a bus rider's welfare, bus shelters on more of Austin area bus stops need to be installed and when possible, trees should be planted near these shelters.



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PODER's Bus Rider's Union

In 1995, PODER (People Organized in Defense of Earth and her Resources) initiated its transportation campaign. The purpose of the "transportation campaign" is to advance the understanding and involvement of local communities of color in the transportation planning and decision-making process.

Now called the Transportation and Quality of Life Campaign, PODER currently encompasses three elements in this project: community empowerment, youth empowerment, and a community-based research project. As part of the campaign, PODER works with community groups to identify the transportation needs of the community and to identify specific steps which may be taken to ensure that these needs are met.

Currently, PODER has established a Bus Riders Union aimed at the economically disadvantaged, the old, the young, and the disabled. PODER's Bus Riders Union is proposing the elimination of bus fares, 24-hour bus services, high frequency express and cross-town routes, aggressive promotion of vanpools, and implementation of bike racks, baby stroller storages, and bus shelters on most bus stops. We would like to see a transit system that does not seek to limit the benefits offered to its riders, one aimed at being competitive with the personal automobiles. It is our goal to help lead our city into a better-operated transit system. A system that services the low-income, elderly, young and people who do not wish to own or drive a car. We want to be part of the solution for the obstinate traffic and pollution problems that burden our lives and economy.

24-Hour Bus Services

Transit services should run in a twenty-four hour time period to serve the needs of workers who hold jobs that are open for twenty-four hours. Currently

Capital Metro buses stop running at 12am. Workers from HEB, fast food chains, hospitals, high-tech facilities, and some gas stations lack the option of taking a safer and more cost-efficient way to where they live. We are recommending that a hybrid-electric transit bus system be created such as the one currently available to Tennessee riders. The hybrid-electric bus is clean, quiet, and efficient. Tennessee increased their ridership through their environmentally friendly transit buses with an ultra-low emission engine that is from 88% to 96% lower in emissions than the EPA 2003 standard for diesel bus engines. The engine used is called Capstone MicroTurbine™ and is air-cooled, requires no liquid coolant or oil changes for the lifetime of the system and has a lower fuel cost. It is much quieter than a regular engine and is vibration free and less polluting than a regular engine. The system contains advanced sealed gel lead acid batteries that are maintenance free and an all-electric climate control system.

Free Fares

It costs less to operate a transit system if no fares are charged. This is because the transaction cost is eliminated. The price for collecting fares costs money, such as depreciation and maintenance of fareboxes, the printing and distribution of passes and transfers, the operation of the cash-room, hiring of armored car service, and the premium charge by the Authority's depository bank for the handling of large amounts of change. Without a fare, the time to evaluate costs of the time of the on-board transaction while passengers produce the exact change needed for the fare is eliminated. This way, time is eliminated and passengers can be more quickly boarded at both doors.

With a lower operating cost and increased ridership, the cost per rider will clearly decrease if fares are eliminated, yet it will not necessarily decrease the funding per rider. The funding per rider will only decrease if the ridership gain is so strong that the reduction in the cost per rider exceeds the average fare. Capital Metro's 1989-90 Free Fare program proved this point. Ridership increased by 80% and funding per rider dropped from \$2.25 to \$1.07.

As a result of the decision to reimpose fares, the system lost 20,000 boardings from the average ridership in '91 and '92. Free Fares dramatically improve

not only the performance of existing transit service, but will lower marginal subsidy per rider incurred by all future service improvements.

High Frequency Express and Cross-Town Routes

Improved frequency in the performance of transit buses is the improvement most often requested by riders in ridership surveys and public hearings. Frequency is a critical measure of the convenience of a transit route. Capital Metro commonly introduces new routes with 20-30 minute wait (headways). This is not even remotely competitive with the automobile.

Cross-town routes should be implemented at waits (headways) no greater than 10 minutes to achieve an improvement in system connectivity. Frequency becomes twice as important in determining the convenience of the service whenever a transfer is involved. A trip requiring a transfer will require two waits at a bus stop, lengthening the total trip time correspondingly. Additionally, the penalty for even a slight failure in on-time performance can be unacceptably high, when a connection is missed. Fortunately, route lengths for cross-town routes can be very short, and routes can be selected that maximize operating speeds, to minimize the number of vehicles needed to perform the service at the needed frequency.

Aggressive Promotion of Van Pools

In 1988, the Capital Metro Board decided to aggressively promote vanpooling. They budgeted their money to build more vans and to hire a salesperson to do presentations for major employers.

To begin with, the cost per rider of a vanpool is significantly lower than that of the average bus route because: 1. The cost of the van reflects the financial system inherent in the use of a mass-produced vehicle using mass produced parts. 2. There is no wage and benefit cost incurred by the driver.

No other service provided by Capital Metro offers such a direct impact on vehicular traffic as the Van Pool program. Vanpools carry peak-hour home-to-work trips and address the worst traffic areas. At a ten person average load, each van trip represents approximately 8 auto trips, which is a low-cost means of reducing traffic. Vanpools are Capital Metro's most powerful tool for achieving a more compact city. If promoted, spatial impacts, which occur when transit improvements reduce the

PODER Unión de Pasajeros de Autobús

Nuestra corriente sistema de transporte hace la propiedad de un vehículo una necesidad en vez de una preferencia y esto daña a familias y comunidades. Le quita dinero a familias, separa comunidades, amenaza el salud y seguridad y contribuye a la declinación de vecindades que a una vez era vibrante. A pesar de los claros impactos en salud y riqueza de las comunidades, los creadores de decisiones de la sistema de transporte quedan enfocados casi de una sola idea de los automóviles. El resultado es un enorme inversión demasiado en nuevas carreteras, negligencia de otras opciones, y desprecio a alguien que no puede conducir: los desventajados de la economía, los ancianos, los jóvenes, y los incapacitados.

El transporte público afecta nuestras vidas diarias y tiene que acomodar a los necesarios de todos. Capital Metro se encarga de la operación y mantenimiento de otras formas de transporte. Pasajeros de autobús necesitan estar enterados de medidas de calidad y seguridad que ofrece Capital Metro. La Unión de Pasajeros de Autobús de PODER está proponiendo al el consejo de Capital Metro y al Consejo Municipal de Austin las siguientes recomendaciones:

- *Servicio por 24 horas
- *Eliminación de todas las tarifas transitas
- *Rutas expresas por la ciudad de alta frecuencia
- *Promoción agresivo de cooperación para compartir los gastos de transporte en camión de mudanza
- *Poner en ejecución perchas de bicicletas y almacenaje de paseantes de bebé en todos los autobúses
- *Instalación de refugios en la mayoría de las paradas de autobúses

Pueblo Organizado en Defensa de la tierra y sus Recursos (PODER):

Nuestra misión es el nuevo definimiento de asuntos discutidos de el ambiente asuntos discutidos sociales y de justicia económica y colectivamente arreglar nuestra agenda para dar atención a estas preocupaciones a los derechos basico: humanos. Procuramos a facultar nuestras comunidades por educación y acción.

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PODER Bus Riders' Union

Our current transportation system makes owning a car a necessity rather than a choice, and this hurts families and communities. It drains family wallets, severs community ties, threatens health and safety, and contributes to the decline of once vibrant neighborhoods. Despite these clear impacts on community health and wealth, transportation decision makers remain focused almost single-mindedly on moving automobiles. The result is huge over-investment in new highways, neglect of other options, and disregard to anyone who cannot drive: the economically disadvantaged, the old, the young, and the disabled.

Public transportation affects our daily lives and should accommodate to the needs of everybody. Capital Metro is in charge of operating and maintaining alternate forms of transportation. Bus riders need to be aware of quality and safety measures Capital Metro offers. PODER Bus Rider's Union is proposing to the Capital Metro Board and to the Austin City Council the following recommendations:

- *24 hour bus services
- *Elimination of all bus fares
- *High frequency express and cross-town routes
- *Aggressive promotion of van pools
- *Implementation of bike racks and baby stroller storages on all buses
- *Installation of shelters on most bus stops

People Organized in Defense of Earth and her Resources (PODER):

Our mission is redefining environmental issues as social and economic justice issues, and collectively setting our own agenda to address these concerns as basic human rights. We seek to empower our communities through education, advocacy and action.

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