



**Pittsburghers for
Public Transit**

This Bus Is For All of Us!

**Annual Strategic Plan
2023**





**Pittsburghers for
Public Transit**

PPT 2023 Strategic Plan:

“This Bus Is For All of Us”

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Who we are and why we organize

In 2023, we will lead with the slogan “This Bus is for All of Us.”

Pittsburghers for Public Transit (PPT) is a grassroots union of transit riders, workers and neighbors who organize for more equitable, affordable, and accessible public transit that meets all needs, with no communities left behind. PPT is now more than a decade strong, and growing in number, in skills, in leadership, and in impact.

Recap of 2022

We practice what we preach. In 2022, PPT had record member participation in our democratic board elections: in the Summer and Winter member-to-member phone banking to connect and grow our membership rolls to 200 dues-paying members, and in voting for our elected leadership (we had 68 people cast ballots). We have made a consistent practice of Spanish language interpretation in our meetings and actions, and so have seen regular participation by Spanish speakers in our organizing, and have forged a deep relationship with Casa San Jose. We also continue to develop our access-centered culture, incorporating captioning, ASL interpretation, image descriptions, and learning through the Access and Disability for Movement Organization Cohort.

We have also made substantial progress over 2022 in several of our campaigns: PPT won the implementation of a low-income fare pilot, and the adoption of nearly all of our Pittsburgh 100 Days Transit Platform policy demands in Mayor Gainey’s Transition Plan. We stopped the Mon-Oakland Connector and redirected those resources to traffic calming, sidewalks and affordable housing. We partnered with CMU’s Tech4Society to release the Mobility for Who? Report, highlighting the vast inequities of supporting private transportation technology over sidewalk development and maintenance, and public transit. We are building the chorus of voices and research demanding that Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) develop a plan to address the workforce shortage and scheduling issues that have made service unreliable and infrequent.

2023 Organizational Development Goals

In 2023, we will grow our numbers of individual dues-paying members to 300 from 200. We intend to grow participation in our annual Board of Directors elections to a minimum of 50% of these dues-paying members. PPT will follow the recommendations laid out by our member-led Accessibility Committee in our organizing, and work to interpret access more expansively, by providing childcare in community meetings and distributing CONNECT cards during our canvassing.

2023 Key Campaign Goals

2023 is a critical year to bring fully to fruition our organizing around #FairFares, to ensure that the City prioritizes transit riders in its infrastructure and land use investments, and to ensure that candidates for Allegheny County Executive center PPT's transit demands around fares, service, funding and rider representation in their campaigns.

FairFares:

Affordable fares are a key to achieving transit justice. Shifting transit costs away from regressive user fees and onto the Department of Human Services (DHS), municipalities and corporations will secure a dedicated stream of funding for transit while also growing ridership.

Key goals

1. PPT will enroll a minimum of 500 transit riders into the Department of Human Services (DHS) low income fares pilot program, through a combination of the fairfaresnow.org website, a PPT telephone support line, and canvasses. Over the course of the coming year, PPT will highlight several rider stories about the need and impact of a free fare fare program for SNAP eligible households, to build the demand for a permanent and expanded low income fare program after the Department of Human Services (DHS) pilot concludes.
2. Bulk transit fares are important mechanisms to make corporations pay their fare share for transit costs. PPT will secure free transit passes for all City of Pittsburgh employees, to fulfill one of our policy priorities in the Pittsburgh 100 Days Transit

Platform. This will be a way to publicize the need for and to pressure Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) to develop a bulk transit fare program. PPT will then work with Pittsburgh City Planning to use a combination of incentives and mandates to push developers to purchase bulk transit passes for tenants and workers.

Mid-year check-in facilitation questions and notes

- What ways did we raise attention about this issue to decision makers and the public, or how did we put pressure on public officials to act?
- What demonstrates that we have made an impact with this campaign, to both the public and elected officials? How should we measure success?
- What are some challenges we experienced, and opportunities for improvement?
- How can we progress this campaign over the next six months? Are there any other related issues that we should be working on?

Notes from breakout group:

- Share and center the positive stories about how the low income fares pilot program has impacted people's lives
 - We heard two contrasting stories from Tamika re: her reduced fare pass experience and her friend's experience with the free fare.
 - Dean thinks it could be great to make more media out of these stories and more folks' experiences.
- If this program is extended the application process needs to be more inclusive and accessible by being in multiple languages, internet AND paper applications, better marketing campaign because it was very confusing

County Executive Race:

The 2023 County Executive race is incredibly important for transit riders. County Executive Rich Fitzgerald has been hostile to Pittsburghers for Public Transit for the entirety of PPT's existence, but he cannot run again in this coming year's race. The County Executive position has the power to hire and fire the CEO of Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT), appoint most members of the PRT board, approve the budgets of PRT and the County Department of Human Services, among many other roles. ([recap of Primary Campaign work](#))

Key goals

1. In 2023 PPT will educate County Executive candidates on transit rider demands, particularly regarding the #fairfares campaign, on service restoration, transit funding, affordable housing and transit development, and rider representation on the PRT board. To do so, PPT will host transit ride-alongs with County Executive candidates to lay out issues and opportunities, and will raise transit demands in candidate forums and questionnaires.
2. PPT will also work to educate riders about the positions of candidates on these demands. PPT will publish op-eds and run petitions to build the base of riders engaged in this pivotal race, and get riders to vote with transit as a central issue.

Mid-year check-in facilitation questions and notes

- What ways did we raise attention about this issue to decision makers and the public, or how did we put pressure on public officials to act?
- What demonstrates that we have made an impact with this campaign, to both the public and elected officials? How should we measure success?
- What are some challenges we experienced, and opportunities for improvement?
- How can we progress this campaign over the next six months? Are there any other related issues that we should be working on?

Equitable Infrastructure:

Transit begins and ends with safe and accessible infrastructure, like maintained and unblocked sidewalks, curb cuts, and bus shelters. With this supportive City of Pittsburgh mayoral administration, PPT will continue to insist that DOMI and the City refocus on accessible and equitable infrastructure rather than on transportation tech.

Key goals

1. PPT will publish research on the resident demographics, transit usage, infrastructure and key transit destinations in each Pittsburgh City Council district, to make a compelling case about why City Council members should care about transit. We will pair this research with Transit Troubles stories from those districts, and organize riders in each district to contact their City Council members to take action on issues around infrastructure accessibility and transit service quality. PPT will

develop an advocacy kit for residents to engage in an on-going way to demand transit infrastructure improvements in neighborhoods and on streets that the City's Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI) are planning to improve.

2. In 2023, PPT will organize riders to demand that the City of Pittsburgh and the State of Pennsylvania not renew the Spin scooter authorization beyond the 2 year pilot period.
3. PPT will collaborate with DOMI to secure competitive federal funds for PPT's 100 Day Transit Platform priorities by providing letters of support and hosting press conferences or forums to demonstrate community need, as is appropriate.

Mid-year check-in facilitation questions and notes

- What ways did we raise attention about this issue to decision makers and the public, or how did we put pressure on public officials to act?
 - Scooter hearing, testimony and local news stories
 - Accessible bus stops by PRT
 - Promoting DOMI meetings and uplifting the importance of transit planning
 - Paul O'Hanlon and City County taskforce's concerns about BRT accessibility, PPT support and sign-on
- What demonstrates that we have made an impact with this campaign, to both the public and elected officials? How should we measure success?
 - DOMI treating transit improvements as explicit part of their projects
- What are some challenges we experienced, and opportunities for improvement?
 - BRT accessibility needs to be a focus
 - Uplifting accessibility in all infrastructure campaigns, maybe make this more explicit
 - Birdog the City accessibility staff hire
 - How can we enlist more local political allies outside the City? Swissvale? Homestead?
 - What are we doing re collaboration w DOMI
- How can we progress this campaign over the next six months? Are there any other related issues that we should be working on?
 - City of Pgh will start a comprehensive plan sometime this year, which should include infrastructure.
 - Broken wheelchair lifts on PRT buses
 - Keep tabs on what Paul is doing on BRT

- SPC work

Service Issues/Worker Shortfall:

Transit service is in crisis. Riders are watching service whittled away with every quarterly service change. Buses routinely show up very late or not at all. Transit operators are being forced to skip breaks and lunches, and are not provided adequate bathroom facilities even when they have time to use the restroom. Communications about service disruptions are sporadic and inaccessible to many. We've got to reverse this trend of diminishing and poor quality service.

Key goals

1. PPT will have at least 50 riders testify at PRT board meetings around the service crisis, calling for the agency to develop a transit worker recruitment plan and goals, and to immediately address the mismatch between scheduled run times and the actual time needed to run a route. PPT will host at least one large rally in 2023 on this topic.
2. PPT will elevate testimony by operators around the scheduling issues and poor working conditions through social media and an op-ed, co-written with the ATU leadership.
3. PPT will lay out demands to PRT about accessible, multi-lingual and expanded communications around service disruptions, using the Beechview red line service outages survey to demonstrate the harm to riders and businesses.

Mid-year check-in facilitation questions and notes

- What ways did we raise attention about this issue to decision makers and the public, or how did we put pressure on public officials to act?
- What demonstrates that we have made an impact with this campaign, to both the public and elected officials? How should we measure success?
- What are some challenges we experienced, and opportunities for improvement?
- How can we progress this campaign over the next six months? Are there any other related issues that we should be working on?

Transit for All PA!

Transit funding is not currently in jeopardy, as it appears that the state is willing to continue funding transit at the same levels as it has in the past ten years. While that amount is not sufficient to grow transit and is not guaranteed, it is clear that funding concerns are not the cause of the current transit issues that we are seeing in Allegheny County. While PPT has helped develop an important statewide network of transit workers and riders in Transit for All PA!, the state legislature has been too divided to make significant headway in passing public transit legislation.

Key goals

1. In 2023, PPT will continue to monitor developments in the state legislature around public transit and transportation technology, and organize riders and workers as appropriate.
2. PPT will work with national partners to develop model legislation, to be passed at the state level, specifically around transit service restoration and expansion. This legislation would identify federal funding that could be used specifically to hire and retain transit workers all across the state, and to grow service frequency.

Mid-year check-in facilitation questions and notes

- What ways did we raise attention about this issue to decision makers and the public, or how did we put pressure on public officials to act?
- What demonstrates that we have made an impact with this campaign, to both the public and elected officials? How should we measure success?
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