

FAST TRAINS ARE COOL



Student PIRGs

www.studentpirgs.org

“There's no reason why we can't do this. This is America.”

President Obama, April 14, 2009

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You can download the resources mentioned throughout the packet at www.studentpirgs.org.



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Problem

Americans all want a safe, clean transportation system that lets us all get where we need to go – but our current system just isn't working.

Our reliance on cars and planes to get from point A to point B means our transportation system consumes more oil than the whole economy of every other country in the world except for China, and we import most of that from foreign countries. Emissions from cars and trucks account for a third of the nation's global warming emissions. Those emissions pollute the air we breathe and make people sick. The status quo is also expensive—we spend a ton on gas, car maintenance and lost time spent sitting in traffic.

Worse yet, the way our federal government spends transportation money right now actually encourages these problems by funneling billions into constructing new roads year after year. Since the 1950's, when the nation was first building the Interstate Highway system, the federal government has spent nine times more on highways than public transportation. Once a new project is approved, the funding problems continue—the federal government will cover 80% of the cost of new highways, but typically less than half of the cost of new transit projects. Finally, while countries in Europe and Asia have had fast trains for years, 2008 was the first year that we made any real down-payment on a high speed rail network for the U.S.

That means that our existing public transportation projects struggle year after year to find enough funding and communities with worthy transportation projects watch them sit on the drawing board.

Solution

We need a 21st century transportation system, one that prioritizes public transit projects and high speed rail. That would mean living in an America where we can get from city to city without having to sit in traffic or waste time in airport security lines and where we are able to get where we needed to go within our cities by trains and buses.

Public transit reduces oil consumption, traffic congestion, and global warming pollution. A full bus, for instance, replaces fifty cars on the road. Each year America's rail and bus systems reduce our nation's oil consumption by 3.4 billion gallons, and avoid 26 million tons of global warming emissions. And, with global warming pollution getting worse, daily commutes costing families thousands each year and taking time away from other activities, there's now strong public support for change.

To really see a 21st century transportation, however, we need to change the way that the federal government spends money on transportation. Rather than spending 80 cents of every federal transportation dollar on more and more highways, we need the federal government to use the following principles as it doles out transportation dollars:

- expand clean, efficient transportation choices, including modernized transit and high speed rail,
- prioritize fixing our crumbling roads and bridges over new highway construction, and
- spend taxpayers' money wisely.

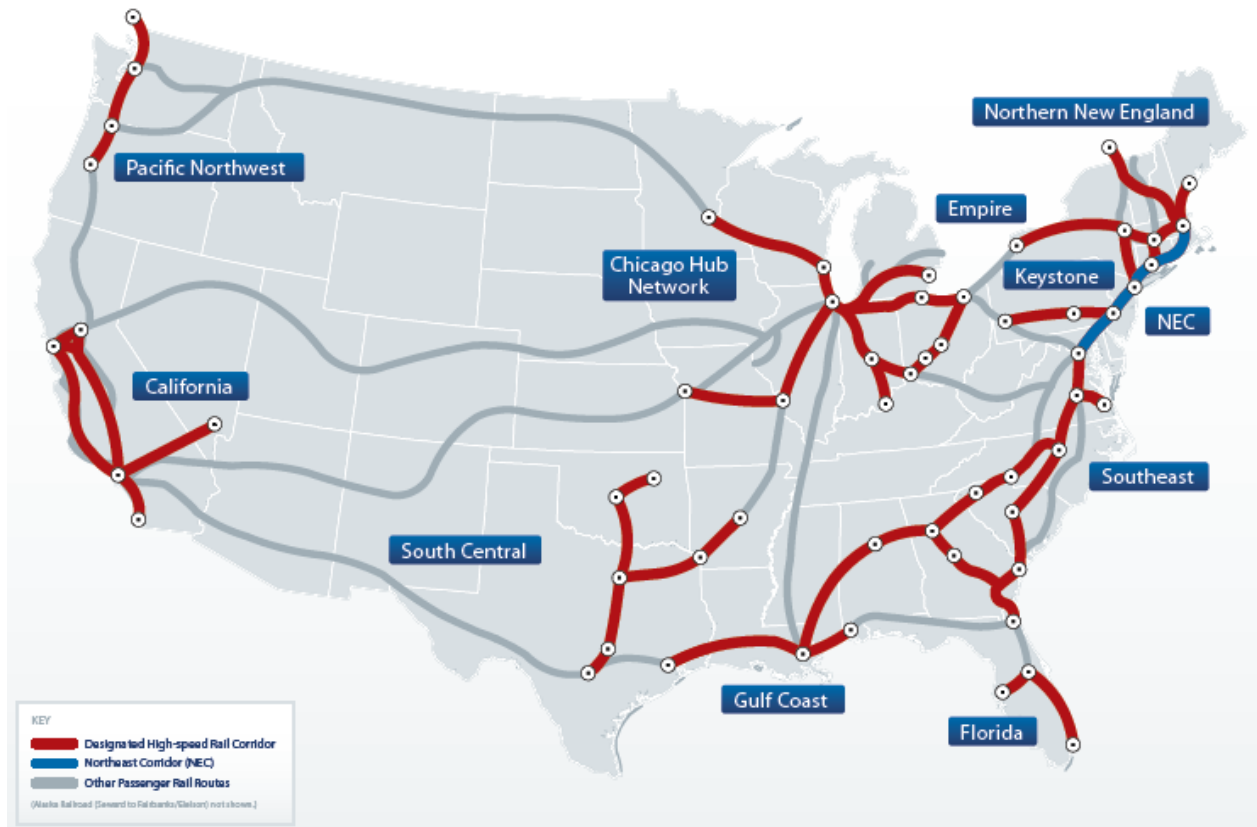
In the same way that a national investment and vision created the highway system we can create a 21st century transportation system.

Demand for Change

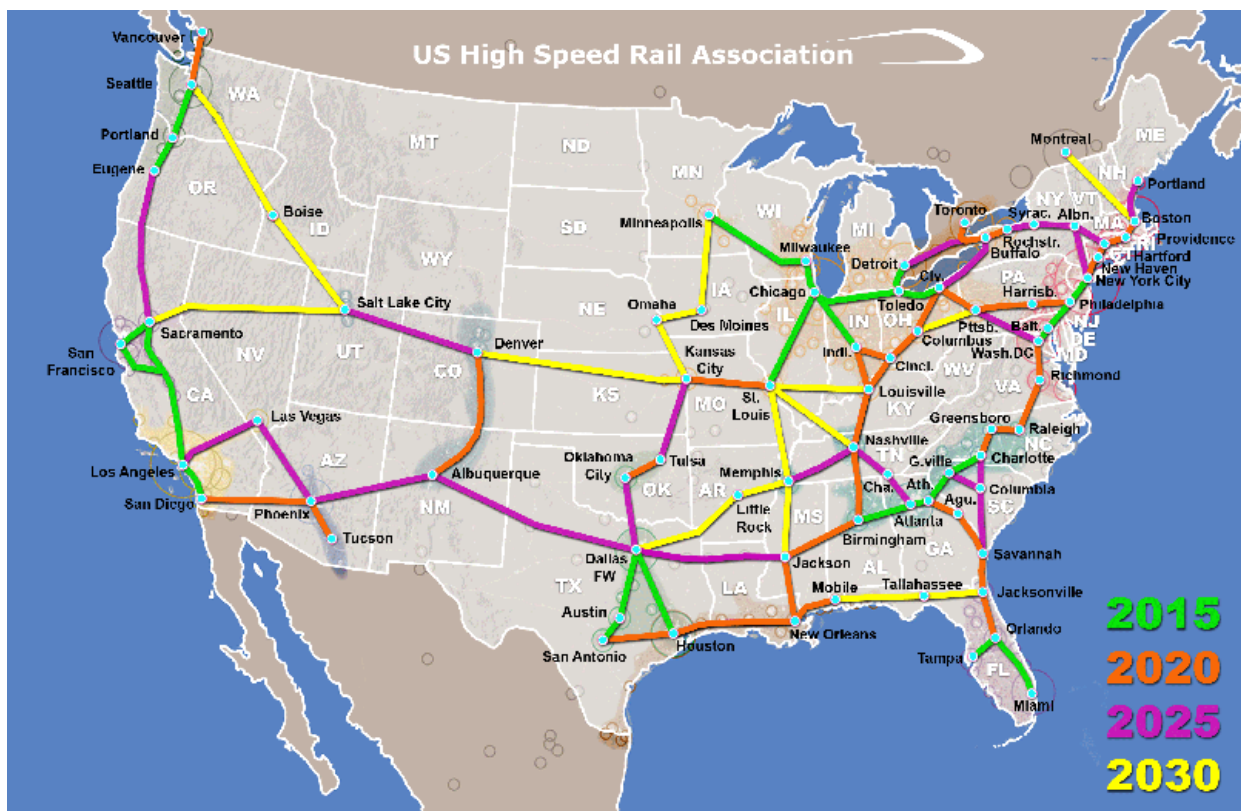
The great thing is we know what we need to do. From the federal plans for high speed rail to city and state plans for expanding existing mass transit projects and building efficient new ones, we have the plans in place to revolutionize our transportation system.

However, absent national investment in those plans, they'll stay on the drawing board. For example, the Federal Rail Administration received applications for high speed rail projects from 40 states totaling \$103 billion this year in response to the down payment of \$8 billion allocated under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Already, the Obama administration's vision for high speed rail would create networks across the country:



In addition, states and regions have proposed additional high-speed rail lines that could someday make an even more robust network.¹



¹ US High Speed Rail Association

Beyond high speed rail, countless cities and regions have proposals for commuter rail systems and in-city public transportation that will need federal support to become reality. For example, in Massachusetts and Connecticut there are proposals for a commuter line linking New Haven to Springfield via Hartford. Likewise, in Maryland, a “purple line” around D.C. could provide commuters with a real alternative to the infamous DC Beltway highway.

Challenges and Opposition

As momentum for high speed rail and additional public transportation projects has built up over the past few years, opposition to this bold vision has as well. Nationally, the road builders, truckers and to lesser extent car companies are pushing hard to keep our investments focused on cars and trucks and specifically on building unnecessary new road lanes. In states, several political leaders have taken that opposition a step further by literally giving back millions in federal money to build out high speed rail.

In the states, budgets also remain incredibly tight. That means that new infrastructure projects will be hard to pass in the short term—they’ll be competing with existing programs for limited revenue. Unfortunately in a number of places it also means that existing transportation projects will be facing big cuts or fare increases.

That means this year our focus will have to be on beating back bad proposals that take us further from our vision while at the same time keeping the drumbeat of public support high for rail and mass transit.

21st Century Transportation Campaign

Goal

Long term, our goal is to pass a transportation bill that doubles the portion of federal transportation funding that goes to clean, efficient public transportation and rail, and is consistent with our transportation principles:

- Expand clean, efficient transportation choices, including modernized transit and high speed rail
- Prioritize fixing our crumbling roads and bridges over new highway construction
- Spend taxpayers’ money wisely

In the short term, we’ll be working locally to continue and expand existing public transportation projects and to preserve the gains for high speed rail and mass transportation we’ve made nationally in the past couple of years. We’ll also look for opportunities in Congress to secure more funding for high speed rail to make sure that vision moves closer to reality.

By continuing the drumbeat of support and success with local and regional transportation and high speed rail, we’ll be moving the political situation nationally back to a place where we can talk about implementing more and more of our transportation agenda.

Strategy

Where we find a valuable local transportation project on the chopping block, or where we have opportunities to create new projects, we’ll work to do so. That will mean developing local campaigns on these issues.

We’ll also continue to generate media attention and public support for high speed rail.

Tactics: Local Transportation Campaigns

Each campaign for a local transportation project will be different. They dynamics of your area, the decision-makers, the problems you're seeking to address, etc. will vary from campaign to campaign. Instead of making a universal, one-size-fits-all guide to local campaigns, this project packet includes two resources for you to develop your campaign locally.

- First, Arizona PIRGs *Why and How to Fund Public Transportation*, a paper discussing the funding options for local transit as well as their advantages and disadvantages. This report, while somewhat dense, should be useful in deciding with your transportation coalition what are the best funding options for the transit projects you care about.
- Second, our guide to developing a local campaign. This guide will help you, from start to finish, determine what your goals are, how to target a decision-maker and how to create and execute a winning strategy.

In addition to those resources, your state advocates, organizing director and the Student PIRGs Program Director, Megan Fitzgerald, can all be very helpful in coming up with and troubleshooting your campaign plan.

Megan Fitzgerald
Student PIRGs Program Director
(312) 544-4436 x204
meganf@studentpirgs.org

Tactics: Generating Media Attention

Letters to the Editor

Host a campaign letter to the editor writing party (see sample in the resources section). Letters to the editor are one of the easiest and most effective ways to get media attention. In the case of transportation, they also let us tell more personal stories about why we need better transportation alternatives.

How to:

For a great how-to guide for writing and getting letters to the editor printed, take a look at the Student PIRGs Activist Toolkit here: <http://www.studentpirgs.org/activist-toolkit/ite>

High Speed Rail Tours

In a number of states, students have been able to generate both a ton of media and grassroots support by holding media tours of the states' proposed high speed rail routes. Students from the chapters travel the route that high speed rail would take, holding press conferences with students and local VIP's (think the Mayor, University President/Chancellor or the member of Congress) at the proposed stops along the route. Here's a shot from one of the Wisconsin events in the summer of 2009:



Congressman Steve Kagen dons a T-shirt for a group photo in Appleton, WI.

How to:

1. Figure out your rail/tour route.

The purpose of these events, in part, is to highlight what high speed rail could bring to your state/region—so the news conferences and tour should be along the proposed route. To figure out where the stops would be, you'll first want to talk to your OD and Advocate/State Director. The Federal Railroad Administration also has maps of the major proposals here: <http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/203>

2. Set your dates.

Before you can start recruiting fellow students and VIP's to tour with you, you need to pick dates. The best time to do a tour will be when students are out of classes (since they'll have to travel the proposed route). In California, UC students did their tour during spring break and in Wisconsin, students did theirs after school let out.

3. Find locations.

Once you know the cities you'll do media events in, you'll need actual locations for the events. Your events should be both accessible to the media and help to tell your story. The most ideal would be a current or proposed rail station that's near a major road. Take a look at a couple examples from the Wisconsin tour:



WISPIRG student event for High Speed Rail with Green Bay Mayor, James Schmitt

4. Recruit students.

These press events are all about showing that people in your state and region want high speed rail—so you'll need people to go on the tour with you. You'll want one or two students willing to act as spokespeople.

5. Recruit VIP's.

Having a local elected official, business leaders or the head of a local college or university both shows that you have VIP support for high speed rail and helps to get media coverage. Try for mayors, city council members, state legislators, college presidents and members of congress. Your OD and state director should have ideas of VIP's to invite. To get them to come, start by sending a letter inviting them to the event. Then, follow up over the phone. The earlier you start, the more likely the event will fit in their schedules.

6. Have good visuals.

Along with your location and VIP's, you'll also want to have other visuals for the media. In the California and Wisconsin tours, students wore high speed rail t-shirts, carried signs about why they wanted high speed rail and had a blow-up of the rail route. As you can see in the photos, they also made sure to have their organizational banner. Here's the logo California students used for their t-shirts:



7. Invite the media.

Like any news event, you'll want to have a great media outreach plan. Take a look at the section on news conferences in the Student PIRGs Activist Toolkit for how to's: <http://www.studentpirgs.org/activist-toolkit/news-conferences>

For even more ideas, check out the coverage of last year's tours in Connecticut (<http://www.connpirg.org/news-releases/transportation/transportation-news/students-lead-high-speed-rail-tour-across-connecticut>) and Colorado (<http://www.copirgstudents.org/springbreak>).

Bake Sales

Mass transportation should be a high priority, but year after year it has to fight for crumbs in the state budget. One way to highlight how we need investment is to hold a citizens bake sale for transit.

Bake sales are visibility events to make the point that transit is important and deserves funding. They give the press, specifically TV, an opportunity to show young people organizing others in support of transit. While you don't actually sell the cookies, you hand out fliers that urge people to call their reps and support more funding for transit. These events work best when there is a proposed cut or reduction in service, but they can also make the point that, on the federal level, transit receives less than 20 percent of transportation funding.

Event Message: Public transportation saves us gas and gives people a low-cost alternative to driving, but the (transit agency) has to fight for crumbs to provide service. So we have decided to hold a bake sale to support the local transit system. But our cookies will only go so far, will you call your representative to support a more federal investment in clean, energy-efficient public transportation.

How to:

- Find a location.
You'll want a high traffic area – potentially at a major transit stop or outside the state capitol (if it involves a state budget message).
- Pull together your materials.
You'll want baked goods, fliers, volunteers to hand out baked goods and ask walker-bys to sign petitions.
- 1. Invite the media.
Take a look at the Student PIRGs Activist Toolkit for tips on inviting and getting media coverage here: <http://www.studentpirgs.org/activist-toolkit/news-conferences>

Tactics: Research

We know the public is supportive of both public transportation and high speed rail and that it will be good for businesses as well as the economy. While generating grassroots support is a great way to demonstrate that, conducting and releasing a research project can also be helpful.

The basic steps to a good research project are:

- Set your goal. What are you trying to prove or demonstrate? What's the most effective way to do that (research, survey, etc?)
- Create your survey or research plan.
- Conduct your survey or research.
- Compile the results into a quick report, proofread and release to the media.

At every step of this process, it will be helpful to get feedback from coalition partners, professors that are supportive and your state PIRG staff.

Here are two ideas for research reports to create:

Student Transit Priorities

Students and young people are not only among the most supportive of these projects, but also among the most likely to focus on transportation and livability issues in their life choices. What graduate wants to live in an area where driving and sitting in traffic is the only option?

Since we also know that local and state leaders count on graduates staying in the area to attract high-end employers, it's helpful to demonstrate that people will be more likely to live where there are good transit options.

Here are some questions to include in your survey:

- Where are you from?
- What school do you attend?
- What is your major?
- What year in school are you?
- What types of jobs do you plan to apply for upon graduation?
- Are you planning to stay in the area? (have people rank the likelihood they'll stay)
- To what extent do the following factors matter in choosing where you'll live (have people rank):
 - Job prospects
 - Close to friends/family
 - Size of the city
 - Housing costs
 - Length of commute
 - Ability to commute without driving
 - Mass transportation options

Business Leader Stories

In nearly all cases, knowing that business leaders support and will be helped by building a transit project will prove a compelling argument. Business leaders are well known and respected in the community and political leaders trust their voice when it comes to the economy and, well, business. Moreover, these types of stories can help to dispel the myth that public transportation only benefits the poorest members of the community.

Here, your goal is to get business owners to not only endorse your campaign or the transit proposal you're supporting, but to also give you stories about why. You should focus your attention on those businesses that are close to and will directly benefit from the transit project you're supporting.

Again your goal is to get good stories and anecdotes from business owners. To help elicit them, here are some questions you can ask:

- Why do you support project X?
- How will project X affect your business?
- How will project X affect the area your business is in?

Tactics: Generating Grassroots Support

Transportation Principles Endorsements

We know that local mayors, city council members and state legislators hold a lot of sway with members of congress. To demonstrate that these folks are on our side, we'll be asking them to sign onto our transportation statement of principles. To do this, you'll first want to figure out (from your OD or state director) who's already signed on, so we don't double-ask them. Then, you'll want to call folks who aren't signed on them and ask them to sign on. You'll find the transportation principles and a rap in the materials section of the project packet.

"I'd Rather be Riding" Events

Can't organize a high speed rail tour? Organize an "I'd rather be riding high speed rail" event. Across the country, we'll gather photo petitions showing that without 21st century transportation, it's tough to get around our country. Whenever there are big events in your area—away football games, Oktoberfest, Concerts, etc.—take photo petitions of students who'd "rather be riding high speed rail to XX Fun Event." OR, take photos of people doing lame things (the dishes, laundry, homework, etc.) holding a sign that says "rather be riding high speed rail to XX Fun Event."

Compile the photos together into a high speed rail un-trip scrapbook and release it to the media and give it to your member of Congress.

There are two types of photos that would make great photo-petitions:

1. Head to an event where you know lots of out-of-towners will be. For example, go to the big football game. Have people take photo-petitions saying “they’d rather have taken high speed rail” to the game. Other events that would present good opportunities:
 - o Big football games
 - o Oktoberfest
 - o Concerts
 - o Thanksgiving
2. Sometimes the problem is that you literally can’t get to the event without a car. Have folks take photo petitions while doing something boring/annoying (like homework) saying that they’d rather have taken high speed rail to the big game.

Examples of what the photo petitions would look like:



For each event you’ll need the following:

- Camera, preferably a digital camera so you can upload the pictures straight to your email.
- Poster board that says “I’d rather have ridden high speed rail” or a small white erase board for people to write what they’d rather have ridden high speed rail to get to.
- Petition sheet with room to write photo numbers (so we can capture people’s contact information and show they’re a constituent).
- Volunteers. You should have at least 2 to pull off an event—one who’s priority is to take pictures, one to focus on asking as many people as possible to take the photo petition.
- Clipboards, pens, PIRG flyers, “Fast Trains are Cool” flyers, volunteer cards

Transit Destinations Flyering

At campuses where there’s a bus pass or similar transit program for students, one cool way to build support for mass transportation is to show people the cool places it can take you. We can do this by making a quick “top 5 transit destinations” flyer and handing it out while we ask folks to sign a petition. For a bonus, work with the student government or campus administration to pass out your flyers from their offices or when bus passes are given to students.

How to:

- Figure out a list of cool destinations. Think of things that students would want to know, like movie theaters, grocery stores, malls, concert venues, museums, etc. If you are new to town, ask juniors and seniors what they think should be included.

- Get transit directions to those destinations. For many cities, googlemaps will search transit directions (<http://maps.google.com/intl/en/landing/transit#mdy>). For cities that aren't on the google search yet, most transit agencies have their own "trip finder" feature or at least a transit map online.
- Plug those directions into a quick factsheet to handout.

Petitions

At the end of the day, we'll also want to gather thousands of petitions showing how much support there is for a 21st century transportation system (see the materials section for petition language). Here are some good ideas for visuals for your tabling events:

"Love Train" events. Theme is that students love trains (light rail, high speed—whichever is relevant in your area) and love people who support them. Use the theme of the "Love Train" song or "C'mon N' Ride the Train." You could hold your event on campus, at the local bus/train station, or downtown in a congested area. Your event might include:

- Organize a conga line to the "love train" song in the campus quad—get admin or local officials joining to show their love of trains. Have other volunteers working the crowd to get petitions supporting 21st Century Transportation signed.
- Collect photo petitions of students saying how they love transit; again use the theme song to make the table more interesting.
- Photo/video petitions themed to "c'mon and let us ride the train" which you then send to your Congressman and upload to YouTube.



Materials

Sample Letter to the Editor

Here in XX City, we need more and better public transit. [insert local example of the problem]

That's why we must reevaluate the way we fund transportation in the United States. Our government currently invests nine times as much funding on new highway projects as it does in public transportation, and this both limits viable options for public transit and largely overlooks the needs of current roads and bridges that are in desperate need of repair.

This year, Congress will consider legislation that will determine how the federal government spends hundreds of billions of dollars for the next six years.

We need our elected officials to increase funding for public transportation projects and high speed rail, to use a "fix-it-first" approach that emphasizes repairing our current roads and highways rather than financing unnecessary new ones, and to use taxpayer dollars wisely. XX State residents deserve a 21st century transportation system and with more federal funding for public transit and high speed rail, we can make that vision a reality.

Sample High Speed Rail Tour News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 1, 2009

CONTACT

Jane Doe, XXPIRG Campaign Coordinator
(555) 837-5309

Students Lead “High Speed Rail Tour” Across California

(San Francisco) - While many students spent their Spring Breaks in Cancun or Palm Beach or other exotic locations, XXPIRG students spent our Spring Break building support for the High-Speed Rail proposal here in STATE. More than XX students are traveling the proposed high speed rail route to draw attention and support for the proposal. Today the students stopped in San Francisco, where they were joined by City Council President John Doe.

High-speed rail would remove up to 92 million car trips off the road annually, reduce global warming pollution and reduce the need to expand expensive roads and airports. In order for such a large project to get built, it needs to be a priority for elected officials and the public.

“California can’t continue to prosper if the only way to get from San Francisco to Los Angeles is by plane or long car rides. It’s time for us to get on track with high speed rail,” said CALPIRG campaign coordinator Jane Doe.

The “High Speed Rail Tour” will continue throughout the week with additional stops in Los Angeles and San Diego.

Sample High Speed Rail Tour VIP Invite Letter

[Date]

[Scheduler's Name]

The Honorable [Representative/Senator X]

DC Office Address

Dear [scheduler's name],

On XXWeek, students from across the state will be holding a tour of proposed high speed rail stops in XXState to build support and educate the community about the proposed high speed rail network. At most stops students are planning a short bike route through each town to the location of the media event. XXPIRG students will wear matching t-shirts and carry a giant map of the proposed train route.

We are writing to invite Senator/Representative XX to the media event we'll have in XXCity as well as the remainder of the tour.

High-speed passenger rail can help solve many of our transportation problems by taking cars off the road and relieving congestion at airports. They provide downtown-to-downtown travel that is typically faster than either flying or driving. High-speed lines generally run on electricity – reducing our dependence on oil – and can be far more energy efficient than airplanes or automobiles, reducing emissions of global warming pollution. XXPIRG is working to make sure that we invest in high speed rail across the country.

We would like to have the [Representative/Senator] join us for the XXCity media event on the high speed rail tour on XXXX date. Please let us know if the [Representative/Senator] is available. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your Title

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

XXX-XXX-XXXX

[email](#)

Sample Bake Sale Press Release

(note: this is an actual release Illinois PIRG used)

For Immediate Release:

Monday, July 2nd
10 am

For More Information:

Brian Imus, Illinois PIRG
312-364-0096, ext. 210

Will the Governor Invest in Public Transit or Just Give Transit the “Crumbs”?

*Activists Hold a “Bake Sale” to Emphasize the Importance of Reliable
Funding for Transit Agencies*

Chicago – While state legislators negotiate a state budget, funding to save transit in Northeastern Illinois remains stalled and Governor Blagojevich is threatening to veto legislation that would ensure reliable transit funding for years to come.

In response, local citizen groups held a bake sale to demonstrate the importance of adequate funding for the state's public transit systems. Activists alerted commuters to the looming cuts in service and fare hikes facing Northeastern Illinois transit and the need for action in Springfield.

“We shouldn't have to sell brownies for buses or baked goods for the RTA to raise money for our public transit systems,” said Illinois PIRG spokesperson Amanda Holmes. “We urge Governor Blagojevich to support reliable transit funding across the Northeastern Illinois region, not stop gap measures.”

Hungry passersby who stopped for a treat were also asked to call Governor Blagojevich and urge him to support legislation that would hold transit agencies more accountable and provide new dollars for transit across the region.

“The leadership in this state, including Governor Blagojevich, must face the reality that without additional funding our region's transit system will fail,” said David LeBreton, Transit Advocate with the Center for Neighborhood Technology. “The residents of Northeastern Illinois should not have to depend on cookies and brownies to solve our transit problems.”

“Transit needs reliable, sustainable funding and unfortunately bake sales won't be enough,” said Rick Harnish, Director of Transit Riders Alliance. “We're here today to demonstrate that if Governor Blagojevich won't address the region's transit needs adequately, citizens will take matters into their own hands to make sure transit is funded.”

During the regular legislative session the House Mass Transit Committee passed legislation that would reform the Regional Transportation Authority and ensure adequate, reliable funding for years to come. Unfortunately, Governor Blagojevich has threatened to veto this legislation.

Last week, Illinois PIRG released a new study that proposed linking reforms of transit agencies with new, permanent funding sources.

“Having funding linked with stronger transit agency accountability is not just good public policy, it's the way to get lawmakers moving so we can keep transit moving,” said Brian Imus, Illinois PIRG state Director and co-author of the report. “Transit is too important to rely on the sale of baked goods.”

Transportation Principles Pledge

Student PIRGs

Advancing Solutions To America's Transportation Problems

The nation's transportation system is in trouble. America's dependence on cars for transportation is the number one cause of our addiction to oil and a major contributor to global warming and air pollution. Americans waste millions of hours each year on congested roads - many of which are in increasingly poor repair. At the same time, we spend billions of taxpayer dollars each year on wasteful projects that should go to basic maintenance, modernization and investments in better transportation choices.

America must move toward a new transportation future for the 21st century that enhances our economy, national security, public health, environment, and quality of life. To get there, we need a new federal transportation policy that does the following:

Expands clean, efficient transportation choices for Americans by prioritizing investment of new capital funds for light rail, commuter rail, rapid bus service, high-speed intercity rail and other forms of modern public transportation. At the same time, federal policy should encourage transportation investments that build dynamic and accessible communities, where more Americans can walk, bike or take transit to get where they need to go.

Fixes our crumbling roads and bridges by investing more federal highway money in maintenance, not massive new highway projects. It's time for the federal government to embrace an approach to highway spending that prioritizes maintaining and modernizing our existing highways over building more.

Spends taxpayers' money more wisely by focusing transportation dollars on solving our nation's biggest problems. For decades, the federal government has spent billions of dollars on highway projects with little evaluation and no accountability. That must change. Federal transportation money should be spent only on projects that produce real results over the long haul - for example, by reducing our dependence on oil, curbing global warming pollution, alleviating congestion, improving safety, and supporting healthy, sustainable communities.

I support 21st Century transportation solutions:

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Developing a Campaign: Transit Funding Options

Again, one of the key strategies for our transportation campaign is to defend and expand local transportation projects. To do that, you'll need to develop a local campaign. What follows is a basic how to for designing local campaigns. You can also find more background on funding options for local transit projects in our report *Why and How to Fund Public Transportation*.

It's available for download here:

<http://www.uspirg.org/home/reports/report-archives/transportation/transportation2/why-and-how-to-fund-public-transportation>

Developing a Campaign: Planning and Strategy

All campaigns require a solid plan – whether you're participating in a national campaign or running a campaign on one campus targeting a local decision-maker.

In the case of local campaigns though, you'll have to do the leg-work to figure out the campaign plan.

This guide outlines the 5 key steps to a good campaign plan. To illustrate these steps we'll walk through a hypothetical campaign at State University to establish a recycling program.

Step 1: Define Your Goal

What change will happen if you succeed?

How will you measure or determine if you've succeeded?

If your goal is long-term, what are short term goals or benchmarks that will help you get there?

Let's say that State University currently doesn't have any recycling program, but the city has a program for collecting and recycling beverage containers. Your ultimate goal might be to establish a program to collect and recycle all recyclable items on campus. Short term, your goal might be to get the campus to setup a collection program for beverage containers it then turns over to the city's program within the next year. Since even that goal might take a couple of semesters to achieve, you'd also want benchmarks along the way.

Step 2: Determine Your Assets and Liabilities

What resources does your organization have?

What resources does your organization lack?

Do you expect opposition? If so what resources do they have and what do they lack?

Knowing your assets and liabilities will help you come up with a realistic campaign plan. It will also help you to think about what you might need to be successful.

For our hypothetical organization at State University:

- Strengths - people power (15 core, plus lots of volunteers), ability to generate grassroots support (signatures, phone calls), staff person on campus, ability to generate visibility (lots of posters, etc.)
- Weaknesses - not so good at getting media coverage or working with faculty, not much money for supplies or ads, limited relationships with other groups.
- Current allies - campus environmental club, community service center.
- Likely potential allies - student government, faculty senate.
- What they bring - Student government: people, money, legitimacy, access to administration. Faculty senate: influence, legitimacy, access to admin, issue expertise.
- Likely roadblocks - (this refers to challenges the campaign will face, in terms of opposition or institutional culture) Administration is slow to take action, and facing a budget deficit. Recycling is likely to cost money to setup.
- Opposition – Campus facilities has been resistant to changing their practices in the past.

Step 3: Determine Your Target and Strategy

Which individual or group has the power to make your goal reality?

Who will make the ultimate decision? Be sure to name names.

Who and what does the decision-maker(s) care about?

These are critical questions to answer because they determine the target of your campaign. This section frequently will take some research, and is often the step where local campaigns get sidetracked.

For our hypothetical chapter:

- Who can deliver our goal: We know that a recycling program would be administered by the office of buildings and grounds. However, the money to run it needs to come from the administration.
- Who makes the decision: Based on the campus power structure, the President will be the one who can make the decision to spend money for this program.
- Who will you target: The campus president.
- Power-mapping them: The key people we'll go after to influence the President are the faculty, the head of buildings and grounds, and the student government (see power-mapping section later in this chapter).
- The key strategies that will influence the President are coalition building (showing that the campus power players support the campaign), research, and media (to get the campus talking about the issue).

Step 4: Decide on Your Tactics and Establish a Time-line

What actual activities will you do to make your strategy happen?

How much will you have to do to win?

What needs to happen when?

This is when you get down to the nitty-gritty planning of the campaign, where you figure out exactly how it will run from day to day. Note how much planning and research has been required before you reach this point.

In this campaign, our tactics are:

- **Research:** Students will research recycling programs at other schools to find examples to point to, collect facts on why to recycle and do a dumpster analysis to see how much trash the school throws away.
- **Visibility/Media:** We want to get an op-ed in the paper, get 10 LTEs printed, and also get coverage at three of our big campaign events. We'll also make a campaign poster and brochure and distribute both.
- **Grassroots:** We'll have a petition to the President urging him to implement recycling.
- **Coalition building:** We want to work with the student government and the campus environmental group; we also want to meet with the head of buildings and grounds to try and get his/her support.
- **Online:** We'll create a Facebook group to demonstrate massive student support for recycling and to publicize our events and online petition. We'll build the group to 500 students and generate 400 online petitions by sending out an email to list-serves.
- **Sequence:** We'll start with the grassroots work, since this will be easy to do as part of the recruitment drive, and also have our researchers start right away. We'll start the coalition building and media after the kickoff.

From here, you would then make a semester plan to lay out these tactics week-by-week.

Step 5: Develop Your Message and Story

What is the central message you'll communicate?

What is the story that will be compelling to your main audience?

How will you communicate with this message to your audience?

In nearly any campaign, you'll have to recruit people to help and support. This is the part of campaign planning where you think about how to present the campaign to the campus community so that it will be as compelling as possible.

With our recycling campaign, our story goes something like this:

- **Problem:** Our campus has no recycling program. Unfortunately, by not recycling, we're contributing to a whole slew of environmental problems.
- **Solution:** We're working with the campus to create a new recycling program.

We'll use this message when tabling, in class raps, on materials, when meeting with coalition partners and decision-makers, etc.

Power-mapping a Decision-Maker

Power-mapping is an important process to use in any campaign, in order to figure out how to win your campaign. It's a very visual process that you should carry out on a chalkboard or big piece of paper. In the steps to developing a campaign, this is an important part of Step Five. Power-mapping is a way of:

- Brainstorming who/what influences your decision-maker.
- Deciding who among those people/groups have the most influence on your decision maker.
- Deciding which of those people/groups you're going to spend time trying to get to support your campaign.

Steps To Power-mapping:

1. **Who has the power to make the decision that will win your campaign?**

Write this person/group's name in the middle of the circle.

2. **Who influences the decision maker on this issue?**

- What are institutional sources of influence?
- Who are key individual within each of those?

List out all the people/groups who influence your decision maker, using the categories in the corners to help you brainstorm.

3. **Weigh the influence of each person/group on the issue. Who are the most influential?**

Circle the most influential.

4. **Of the people/groups on the list, who do we influence and who do we have access to?**

Star the ones we have access to.

5. **Look over the list. Do we have access and influence over the key targets?**

- What groups do we have access and influence with who could help us influence the targets?

Highlight the groups that are both circled and starred.

6. **Estimate your opposition's influence.**

- Go through the influences– who do we influence
- The places where we both have influence are the battlegrounds.
- We win by pre-empting their opposition by contacting the targets first and having a good message (“Of course the oil companies are going to say this is important to national security) or isolating them (“The opposition is just a few companies, we have this whole coalition on our side.”).

7. **Develop your plan for coalition building**

Power-mapping Chart

Write the name of the person (or people) that has the authority to give you what you want in the middle of the circle below. Then make your Power Map. Use the categories listed below to help you brainstorm. After your initial brainstorm, circle those that are the most influential. Then go back through and star the influences to which your group has access. These groups become your primary targets.



Campaign Planning Worksheet

Step 1: Your Goal					
Step 2: Assets and Liabilities	Strengths	Weaknesses	Allies	Roadblocks	Opposition
Step 3: Targeting and Strategy	Decision Maker(s)		Key Strategies		
	Who/What Influences them?				
Step 4: Tactics	Strategies		Tactics		
Step 5: Message and Story					