



## What is Advocacy?

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Rural and urban, men and women, young and old—anyone can be part of our movement to improve public transportation all across the United States. But what is advocacy? The answers might surprise you.

At its most basic, advocacy means taking action to bring about positive change. Advocacy takes many forms. You can choose what you want to do and match your activities to your skills, interests, and availability. ►

All of the following types of advocacy are important parts of the Voices for Public Transit movement.



### **Build Awareness**

Though millions of people use public transportation every day, most do not recognize the challenges involved in improving and expanding it to benefit our communities. We want to plant the seeds about this issue with as many people as possible so that, when the time comes, they will support proposed investments. You can help build awareness by:

#### **Communicating through the media**

Write letters to the editor, submit op-eds, and help reporters. See our overviews on “Best Practices for Letters to the Editor and Op-Eds” and “Reaching Out to Reporters and Bloggers” for ideas.

#### **Sharing your views online**

Online tools are great for raising awareness. Share information, engage in dialogue with your online connections, and more. Explore the section, “Engage on Social Media,” for more suggestions.

#### **Speaking at Events**

Most communities offer opportunities to share your views in a public forum. You might speak at a neighborhood association meeting, ask a question at a city council meeting, or make a presentation to a service club, such as the Rotary. Check out our overview on “Leveraging Local Events” for more ideas.

### **Grow Our Movement**

Advocacy brings about change when many people are involved. You’ll be making a difference by bringing other voices into our movement. You can:

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## Educate People

Before someone joins a movement, they want to know what it's all about. When you educate people, you provide concrete information about what's at stake and what we can achieve if our movement grows.

## Build Relationships

You'll make new friends—and find new supporters—by helping out in your community and building new ties. As you develop relationships with people, invite them to join our movement. ►

## Ask "Will You Join?"

The conventional wisdom is true: it never hurts to ask. When you meet with people, speak at events, or engage online, be sure to ask people directly to sign up for Voices for Public Transit.



For more ideas, see "Recruiting New Advocates."



## Participate in the Process

Many decisions affecting public transportation are ultimately made by elected officials—but they are shaped by the input those officials receive from their constituents. Taking the time to communicate your views, help educate your leaders, and participate in the process can make a big difference.

You can participate in the political process in a number of ways, including:

### Communicate

Advocate by building relationships with government officials. This starts with communicating your views—in writing, by phone, face-to-face, and through the media. Learn more at [Communicating Effectively with Government Officials](#).

### Work on a campaign

You can strengthen your ties with elected officials and advocate at the same time by volunteering to work on a campaign.

### Testify at hearings or speak up at town hall meetings

Look for opportunities to testify at local hearings focused on transportation issues or speak up at town hall meetings when your legislators visit.

### Submit comments

Most regulatory or budget measures undergo periods of public comment where you can submit your views more formally for the public record. This can be a great way to underscore your position and offer crucial information about how public transportation will benefit your community.

### Run for office

If you're really passionate about helping effect change for public transportation in your area, or for other issues that matter to you, consider running for office yourself. Many well-known national leaders began by first running for local or state office.

