

TRANSPORTATION RIDERS UNITED



BECOMING A BOARD MEMBER

Or, “How you can play an essential role in revitalizing our region by being a Leader of TRU. . .”

A guide for prospective Board Members of TRANSPORTATION RIDERS UNITED, Detroit’s Transit Advocate

Table of Contents

- From the Board President
- TRU – Our past, our present, and Detroit’s future
- TRU’s Mission, Vision, and Values
- The Role of the TRU Board of Directors
 - Board Meetings
 - Responsibilities as a Board Member
- Desired Skills/Traits
- Next Steps
- Contacts for Questions

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Welcome, and thank you for taking the time to look through this material. TRU is seeking to expand our Board and you may be a valuable addition to TRU! We want you to understand what being a member of the Board of Directors means to us as an organization.

Transportation Riders United (TRU) is Detroit's transit advocate. Our mission is to improve and promote transit in greater Detroit because we see this as one of the best ways to restore urban vitality, ensure transportation equity and improve our quality of life. TRU believes the Detroit region needs a balanced transportation network because transportation investments shape our future.

TRU works to make this happen by helping our fellow Detroit area citizens see the opportunities that transit offers, engaging them in important transportation decisions, watch-dogging current transportation processes, providing transit expertise to decision-makers and overall working to be the public's voice to ensure that transportation investments support all of our interest in providing a system that is accessible, affordable, accountable and sustainable.

TRU's board of directors is our vital governing force. The board sets our policies and goals through strategic planning, ensures TRU has the financial resources to succeed and is responsible for TRU's adherence to our legal obligations and organizational values. Board members are also important community ambassadors.

Our board of directors should reflect the best of Detroit: Diversity, innovation and dedication to getting the job done. Maybe you have experience in public transit issues, or economic/community development, or maybe you have a knack for politics or fundraising, or are well connected to decision makers in the region. If so, please look through the rest of the information to learn more about TRU, the responsibilities you would take up as a board member and what your next steps would be to explore making that happen.



Thank you again, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kelly Logan, TRU Board President

TRU OUR PAST, OUR PRESENT, AND DETROIT'S FUTURE

In 1999, TRU began as a handful of people outraged by the Detroit region's poor transit service and lack of leadership working to improve it. Some saw the connection between poor transit and Detroit's economic struggles. Others were concerned about the health impacts of air pollution from so many cars and trucks. Still others just wanted their bus to show up on time.

By 2001, TRU became an official 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to improving bus service, breaking down the barriers to real rapid transit, and advocating for smart investments in transportation. Over the next fifteen years, we successfully:

- Blocked the extension of I-375 further into the riverfront, a wasteful boondoggle which would have made impossible the resurgence of the Riverfront of today;
- Led campaigns ensuring overwhelming voter support for each SMART millage renewal;
- Ensured throughout bankruptcy that Detroit leaders recognized bus service as an essential city service that could not be eliminated; and
- Led advocates from across Michigan in lobbying for the creation of the Regional Transit Authority.



Most importantly, we led a transformation in public opinion on the importance of public transit in greater Detroit. When we began, many people didn't think we even needed transit in the Motor City, or thought it was impossible here. Years of consistent outreach and education through presentations, events, media coverage, and more convinced people that quality transit is essential for this region to thrive. Now questions focus on how and when the region will improve transit, not whether or if.

TRU currently employs an Executive Director and several interns managing the day to day implementation of our mission and priorities. Board members and other volunteers still play an essential role in developing policy, providing expertise, and spreading our message throughout the region.

TRU'S MISSION

TRU's mission is to improve and promote transit in greater Detroit in order to:

- Restore urban vitality,
- Ensure transportation equity and
- Improve quality of life.

TRU believes the Detroit region needs a balanced transportation network because transportation investments shape our future.

TRU'S VISION

All people in greater Detroit will have reliable, safe, and affordable access to the places they live, work, shop, and play through a high-quality transit system.

An integrated network of buses, trains, bike routes, and other transportation options will seamlessly connect our cities, region, and beyond.

This system will foster attractive livable neighborhoods, vibrant cities, and a sustainable region.



TRU'S VALUES

- TRU is dedicated to serving the public's best interest. We are part of the community and work on behalf of the community.
- TRU works hard because we are confident that we can make a difference over the long-term.
- We are results-oriented and mission-driven.
- TRU believes in collaboration and teamwork. We seek to engage new and diverse partners and supporters.
- TRU is committed to providing trustworthy information and to making well-reasoned, evidence-based decisions.
- TRU values openness and respectful candor. We strive to always act with honesty and integrity.

THE ROLE OF THE TRU BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is the governing body for Transportation Riders United (TRU). This includes determining TRU's mission, budget and priorities as well as ensuring the organization has the financial resources to fulfill its mission. The Board also selects the Executive Director and provides financial, legal, and ethical oversight and accountability. Each director is elected for a three-year term of office and may serve two consecutive terms.

BOARD MEETINGS

We hold eight to ten board meetings yearly; Board members are expected to make every effort to attend, although call-in options are generally available if needed. These are generally two hours long on a weekday evening (currently Tuesdays) in or near Detroit.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD MEMBERS

As a Director of TRU's Board, you would be required to:

- Be strongly supportive of TRU's mission and vision;
- Be an ambassador of the organization, sharing information about TRU programs among your networks and recruiting friends and colleagues to TRU events;
- Actively participate in most Board meetings (in person or via conference call);
- Participate in TRU's annual Board review and planning retreat;
- Be responsible for TRU's adherence to its legal obligations and organizational values;
- Make a personally significant financial contribution to TRU, at the highest level feasible (based on personal finances, different amounts for everyone, among your top three donations);
- Assist in fundraising for the organization, including supporting our fundraising dinner and annual appeal;
- Publicly support all official decisions of the Board; and
- Assist in identifying future board members.



DESIRED SKILLS/TRAITS – WHAT DOES TRU NEED TO IMPROVE ITS BOARD?

TRU can best achieve its mission with a Board of Directors that provides diverse experiences and viewpoints as well as important skills and connections. While no one person will meet all of these measures, these are some of the traits we are seeking in potential new Board members.

- Fundraising skills and relationships
- Media and Public Relations
- Business people and/or connections to the Business Community
- Finance and financial oversight
- Political experience and connections
- Geographic diversity (currently seeking Macomb and Washtenaw County residents)
- Racial diversity (currently African Americans, Latinos, and Arab Americans)



NEXT STEPS – How do I become a Board Member?

1. Learn more by reviewing our website and Facebook page (Support Detroit Transit).
2. **Meet with a Board member** to learn how we work, to get your questions answered and to give us a chance to get to know you. Contact us if you're interested.
3. **Complete a Board Application** and submit it **by December 4** to Info@DetroitTranst.org to explain your interest and skills.

TRU's Board Development Committee will evaluate Board candidates in comparison to the skills and connections we need and make recommendations to the full Board. The Board of Directors will propose a 'slate' of recommended candidates

At the Annual Meeting in late January, the slate will be presented to members to be voted on to officially join the Board.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

If you have questions or would like to meet with a Board member, please contact us:

- Stephen Maiseloff, Board Development Committee - smaiseloff@gmail.com or (248) 302-0317
- Kelly Logan, TRU Board President - kelly.logan.me@gmail.com or (313) 645-4552
- Megan Owens, TRU Executive Director - MOwens@DetroitTransit.org or (313) 963-8872