



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

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FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Welcome, and thank you for considering this opportunity to join the TRU Board.

For the past twenty years, Transportation Riders United has fought to give transit riders a voice when they have been excluded from the transportation conversation. Over those years, we have advocated for better bus service, defended and protected our transit service providers' limited resources, and even helped architect the Regional Transit Authority. Our hard work has paid off – given the narrow defeat of the 2016 regional transit vote, it is clear that the Motor City is ready for mobility options beyond the car.

At TRU, we are supportive of the most transit for the most people in the shortest amount of time. We have always advocated for public transit and will continue to do so, but we also acknowledge the changing mobility landscape. With advances such as autonomous vehicles, shared ride services, electric scooters, and more, even more options now exist for citizens across the region and the transit system is likely to evolve. TRU is committed to staying up to date on these changes and remaining true to our mission to improve and promote transit in greater Detroit.

Our charge at TRU is to ensure every citizen, including our most vulnerable, can get where they need to go, having access to jobs and opportunities no matter where they live. We hope you will join us in shaping that future, and together, we can help build a more vibrant and inclusive Southeast Michigan.

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

Wendy Ernzen, TRU Board President



Transportation Riders United Board at 2018 Board Retreat

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 expansion of I-375 further onto the riverfront, a wasteful boondoggle which would have made impossible the resurgence of the Riverfront as the attractive pedestrian destination it is today;
- Assisted in ensuring overwhelming voter support for each SMART millage renewal and persuading communities like Farmington Hills to remain in SMART; and
- Ensured throughout bankruptcy that Detroit leaders recognized the importance of reliable bus service as an essential city service that could not be eliminated.



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, Admin & Outreach Coordinator, and several interns to manage 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 board meetings yearly. Board members are expected to make every effort to attend. These are two hours long on a weekday evening in or near Detroit.

COMMITTEES & TASK FORCES

As a member of the board of directors, you are expected to actively participate in a committee or task force. However, these committees are open to non-board members as well. It may make the most sense for you to join a committee versus serve on the board. A sample of our current committees include: New Mobility, Ridership Promotion, Fundraising, Finance, and Board Development.

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;
- Actively participate in most Board meetings (in person or via conference call);
- Participate in TRU's annual Board review and planning retreat;
- Be an ambassador of the organization, sharing information about TRU programs among your networks and recruiting friends and colleagues to TRU events;
- 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;
- Be responsible for TRU's adherence to its legal obligations and organizational values;
- Publicly support all official decisions of the Board; and
- Assist in identifying future board members.

DESIRED SKILLS & TRAITS OF PROSPECTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

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 is expected to meet all of these measures, these are some of the traits we are seeking in potential new Board members.

- Fundraising skills and relationships
- Finance and accounting experience
- Social media and marketing skills
- Business people and/or connections to the local business community
- Transit riders
- Geographic diversity – seeking more Macomb and Washtenaw County residents
- Racial and ethnic diversity

NEXT STEPS – *How do I become a Board Member?*

1. Learn more by visiting our [website](#) and Facebook page ([Support Detroit Transit](#)).
2. **Meet** with a member of the Board Development Committee to get your questions answered and get to know how we work.
3. **Complete a Board Application** and submit it to Info@DetroitTranst.org to explain your interest and skills.
4. 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.
5. The Board of Directors will propose a 'slate' of recommended candidates.
6. 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 more information, please contact us:

- Stephen Maiseloff, Board Development Committee
 - smaiseloff@gmail.com or 248-302-0317
- Wendy Ernzen, TRU Board President
 - wendy.ernzen@gmail.com or 248-935-4711
- Megan Owens, TRU Executive Director
 - MOwens@DetroitTransit.org or 313-963-8872