WE KEEP CANADA MOVING

FIELD MOBILIZATION TOOL-KIT
ATU Mobilization Tool-kit

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STRATEGY VERSUS TACTICS

“All men can see these tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which victory is evolved.”

— Sun Tzu

We call this packet the “tool-kit” because the recommendations you will find within are considered the best “tools” to getting certain jobs done. Just as you would use a hammer for a nail and not a screw, these tools accomplish specific tasks, but it is your job to know what you are building.

The tools are what we call tactics and knowing what you are building is called strategy. It is all too easy to start employing tactics with only a vague idea of what you want to accomplish—without a strategy.

Both words, strategy and tactic, originate from military use. A strategy is the art and science of planning and directing large military movements. A tactic is deploying military forces for battle. Just as the quote above illustrates, the military tactics are what we can see in war—the battles. The strategy is the general’s understand of where, when and why to employ those tactics. Good generals, like Sun Tzu, can anticipate their opponent’s moves and prevent them from successfully using their own tactics.

For our local union officers, this means you too must use strategy and think about what tactics to use where and when. You must try to anticipate how your targets will respond to your tactics.

Most importantly, you must know what you larger goal is. If your city is threatening service cuts, your larger goal won’t be merely to stop the lay-offs but to secure more funding for your transit system. If you goal is not big enough, a victory will translate into only small or temporary benefits. However, if your goal is too big or unrealistic, you will be setting yourself up for an unwinnable battle. Ideally, your strategy should incorporate smaller goals, such as stopping lay-offs, within a larger, winnable goal such as getting more money for your system.

Finally, just as a general, you need to have an army behind you. Your membership is not enough. You will need the support of a broad range of people in your community to have the kind of strength in numbers you need. If you can get the residents of your city or town behind you, chances are you will be able to win.

INTERNAL MOBILIZATION

In this section, you will find information on how to begin an internal organizing campaign, the first step in laying the groundwork for a successful community-based campaign around transit issues in your area. The basics of internal organizing include: developing a good list, recruiting member mobilizers and organizing around an internal campaign, such as getting more members registered to vote.

The suggestions you will find in this tool-kit are meant to engage and activate membership, not quadruple your workload as a union officer. Your job is to figure out what tasks need to be handled by union officers and what can be delegated out to members. Remember the “Iron Rule of Organizing”: Never do for others what they can do for themselves.

Develop a good list

Developing and maintaining an accurate list of member contact information is essential for effective mobilization and activism. If you can’t reach someone, you can’t educate them, persuade them, or mobilize them for action. We must develop the ability to reach our membership through mail, phone, email, text messaging, websites and most importantly through face-to-face discussion.

Every local should work to gain current lists with the following information:
• **Home phone number**  
*Important for all calls from the union, including robo-calls and phone-bank calls*

• **Cell phone number**  
*Allows you to reach members without a home phone, and gives you the ability to reach members via text message. Be sure to ask for permission to text when obtaining numbers, as charges may apply.*

• **Home address**  
*Allows you to mail information or even knock on members’ doors during campaigns*

• **Email address**  
*Provides you with a free, rapid and flexible means of communication with your membership.*

Protect members’ privacy. Don’t share member lists with other organizations.

**Doing assessments**

As you collect member contact information, you may find it useful to do assessments at the same time. Assessments, in which you rank a member’s willingness to become involved in the union and its campaign activities, can be extremely helpful in identifying people who would be interested in becoming member mobilizers.

**Assessing members using the 1-4 scale**

1’s: Member Mobilizers: people who are interested in the union, want to volunteer their time, and want to be involved.

2’s: people who view the union positively, but aren’t yet talking about getting involved.

3’s: people who are essentially neutral; they belong to the union, but don’t have very strong emotions one way or the other.

4’s: people who are antagonistic to the union, do not want to be bothered, and do not want to be involved.

The first step in building a member mobilizer team is to assess your membership using a scale of 1’s, 2’s, 3’s and 4’s. Ideally you want to be utilizing the interest and activity of your 1’s to serve the union, and working on getting your 2’s to become 1’s. As you work with member mobilizers, you want to keep doing this kind of assessment: it will build solidarity and strengthen your internal organizing. As 2’s see 1’s become active and engaged in the union through meaningful volunteer activities, they may start moving towards the “1” scale. Ultimately, you want to be utilizing your 1’s to move your 2’s & 3’s. Members assessed as 4’s will probably never change: it is best not to waste your and your 1’s energy on them.

**Meeting for Movement!**

Tired of union meetings? Discouraged by low turnout? Remember that just because a member doesn’t make it to a monthly union meeting, doesn’t mean they are necessarily un-interested in mobilization. Union meetings are business meetings – when it comes to mobilization efforts, we have to think outside the box and come up with new ways to engage members that is fun, action-oriented, and people to participate with real responsibility.

• Move beyond the union hall: plan to have meetings on the job site (and bring food!)

• Organize a house meeting where a member can host a small group

• Begin and end on time
• Keep meetings to an hour (or less!)
• Have a clear focus and a proposed action to be decided upon
• Meetings are to make a decision about something the people in the meeting are prepared to act on (People should leave meetings with clear responsibilities and accountability)
• Spend less time on approving minutes, more time strategizing for action
• Murphy’s Law: if anything can go wrong, it will. This applies to all meetings. The leader who does not have the courage to impose order will fail, as chaos will break out if order is not imposed.

5. Be clear from the beginning about the time commitment you’re asking for. For some types of volunteer jobs, it may be helpful to have members sign up for short “shifts”.

6. Let volunteers know it is important to complete their assignments— that not only gets the job done, it sends the message that their job is important.

7. Always find a way to thank every volunteer. A thank you can be training for more complex assignments, a certificate or plaque, a thank you letter, sending a birthday card or recognition through your publications or at a meeting.

8. Remind volunteers to dress weather-appropriate, and provide them with food, beverages and restrooms.

Identifying and Recruiting Member Mobilizers

When asking your members to volunteer their time, you want to make sure you are communicating to them just how valuable they are as members and how much their support is needed. Here are a few basic tips for building an active base and keeping your members engaged:

1. Remind members of the special skills or expertise they have, so they understand that they are needed.

2. Give people choices: a member might feel uncomfortable knocking on doors, but might be more than willing to phone-bank or stuff envelopes.

3. Don’t overload volunteers or you’ll lose them. The solution to getting more work done is recruiting more member mobilizers—turning your 2’s into 1’s.

4. Demonstrate what you expect volunteers to do—for example, rehearse a phone bank script.

5. Be clear from the beginning about the time commitment you’re asking for. For some types of volunteer jobs, it may be helpful to have members sign up for short “shifts”.

6. Let volunteers know it is important to complete their assignments—that not only gets the job done, it sends the message that their job is important.

7. Always find a way to thank every volunteer. A thank you can be training for more complex assignments, a certificate or plaque, a thank you letter, sending a birthday card or recognition through your publications or at a meeting.

8. Remind volunteers to dress weather-appropriate, and provide them with food, beverages and restrooms.

Organizing members around an internal campaign

A union’s greatest source of power is its members. Internal campaigns are a great way to engage members and test their level of involvement. Internal campaigns relate to workplace issues, like organizing around a grievance. When grievances are filed, often management’s goal is to drag the process out and waste the union’s time and money, while the union’s goal is to pressure management to settle. Putting pressure on management to resolve the grievance is most effective if management understands that they are dealing with more than just two people (the grievant and the union rep), they are dealing with the whole union. Utilizing your Member Mobilizers and your member contact lists, you can organize simple actions, such as having everyone participate in a solidarity action and even complex campaigns.

An internal campaign is a good way to get an idea of how willing your members are to get involved. Whatever you decide to organize, it
should be something that your members care about (“all interest is self-interest”). It is easy for leaders to assume we know what members are worried about—especially when we hear members complain about this and that. Doing some active listening before planning an action can help ensure that members are behind you all the way. Try active-listening questions during conversation such as:

- How long have you been on the job?
- What made you want to be a [bus driver, mechanic, station clerk]?
- What issues are affecting your work life right now?
- What would you like to see done differently on the job?
- What ways would you consider getting involved?

Remember to make notes on what you discussed after talking with members.

Sometimes we run into instances where members do not understand how issues the union is involved in apply to them. These same questions can be used to help a member uncover why something is in their self-interest even if they didn’t first see it. For instance, they may bring up an issue they care about which you are able to relate back to union activities.

Bus operators in Washington, D.C.’s Metro system had enough: after three assaults on bus operators in a single week and little response from Metro officials they decided to take the issue into their own hands. Led by shop stewards and member mobilizers that were part of an internal mobilization team, they got the word out to all bus operators encouraging them to do a thorough safety check before heading out of the garage in the morning.

The result? Thousands of calls into central communications as bus drivers performed what is a routine check of their safety equipment and radios. Their influx of calls created an overload and nearly shut down central command. Operators had Metro’s attention: safety was no joke.

Officials quickly called for a meeting with union leadership to re-visit prior demands for a better designed bus safety shield along with increased transit police surveillance of the bus system.

COALITION BUILDING

Building Community Campaigns and Powerful Coalitions

A coalition is an organization of organizations working together for a common goal. We build coalitions to amass the power necessary to do something we cannot do as a single organization. The basic steps are identifying common interests, community groups, setting up a meeting and identifying mutual goals or targets of interest.

How do we build effective coalitions?

- Understand the distinct interest of each participating group, it is important that all the members of a coalition understand each other in order to build on their strengths and avoid unnecessary conflicts.
• Choose unifying issues to work on.
• The advantages of coalitions are clear: we win what we couldn’t win alone. We increase the impact of an individual organizations’ effort. It helps increase resources for our cause, draw new leaders into the work, and broaden the scope of our work. (Source: Organizing for Social Change, 2010 pp 97-99)

Getting started...

Identify groups in your community that have a stake in transit. There are many groups out there who either rely on transit or believe in its importance. Environmental groups, smart-growth advocates, senior citizen organizations, churches, disability groups, anti-poverty organizations, and university student groups are just some examples of pro-transit groups that may be present in your community and may even already be engaged in lobbying for better transit. You may find that some businesses also support transit, particularly ones in downtown areas without sufficient parking and those who employ a large number of transit-dependent employees. Other unions, of course, may support transit issues, especially those whose membership depends on it (such as UFCW, SEIU and others).

When thinking about groups in your community who may be willing to support transit issues, it is important to think creatively. Get your executive board together for a brainstorming session, or poll members about what groups they belong to or know of.

Think about messaging. After you’ve got a good list of potential transit coalition partners in your community, the next step is to think about how to approach them. Talking about your next contract fight won’t win you support from potential community partners. However, talking to groups about the larger issues, such as the need for more funding, better service, and the role of transit in economic growth will appeal to their self-interest and help link them up with your local. For instance, disability groups and senior citizens groups know about the critical importance of easy access to transit. Environmental groups understand that more frequent and less expensive transit will give people an incentive to leave their cars at home. Businesses will be aware of how a strong transit system is an engine of economic growth, getting workers to the job site and customers to their doors. Before you approach potential partners, think about what messaging would appeal to them and be prepared for their particular concerns and questions.

Set up a coalition meeting. After you’ve identified potential allies in your community and you’ve thought about how to communicate with them, the next step is to set up an inaugural coalition meeting. You may want to pick a date, time and location in advance ahead of time, so that you have something specific for potential partners to commit to. Your local union hall may be a good location, if you have space; if not, most cities will allow groups to use space in Public Libraries for community meetings. Not everyone who is interested will be available to attend, but let them know they will be on the invitation list for future meetings.

Identify mutual goals and targets of interest. When you have your first coalition meeting, lead the discussion but don’t dominate it. Find out what goals each of your partners have, and what kinds of changes they’d like to see. If they suggest things that run counter to the ATU’s best interest—such as privatizing the transit system—don’t attack them, but explain our position. You may find some groups won’t be as useful to work
with as you thought, and others you'll find a way to work together despite some difference. As you establish common goals with coalition partners, you can start making concrete plans for how to work together to build a campaign.

Join their fight, too. The importance of this cannot be understated. When community groups “go to bat” for the ATU, they expect the ATU to support their interests as well. This doesn’t mean you have to write a check or support issues that conflict with the ATU’s interests. However, lending support when you community partners need it is important for establishing a lasting, reciprocal relationship.

Create a Member Mobilizer Committee. Member mobilizers can help you build coalitions and establish a greater presence in the community, without requiring more time commitments from you as a Union Officer. Begin by identifying the “1’s” in your local that are interested in organizing other members around issues, actions, legislation, and community related topics. We like to call them Member Mobilizers, and you can think of them as ‘Volunteers Level 2’. This is a great opportunity for members that have some interest in becoming stewards to get some experience (and could be a good way to put “loud mouths” to work). Members who agree to be a Member Mobilizer should be able to dedicate at least some time every week to performing organizing tasks. Ideally you should have at least 4-5 Member Mobilizers on the committee. Each Member Mobilizer should take a responsibility (for example, community and clergy outreach, local legislative affairs, young member outreach, retirees, and internal member organizing). If possible, the Organizing Committee should report at the monthly union meeting on activities and outcomes.

Tactics & Actions

Now that you’ve done the hard work--you’ve organized internally, tapped member mobilizers, built coalitions with community groups, and identified a strategic goal--you get to do the fun part: brainstorming some collective actions.

The tactics you choose should create excitement and enthusiasm among your membership, show your union’s power, make the target of the tactic uncomfortable, and earn positive media attention. There are 5 basic criteria for a good tactic:

1. It is focused on the decision maker of the campaign, or the secondary target if they have influence over the decision maker.
2. It puts power behind a specific demand. The weakest tactic is one that is not aimed at anyone and makes no specific demand.
3. It meets your organizational goals as well as your issue goals. That is, it builds your union power as well as helping win the issue.
4. It is outside the experience of the target. A tactic that catches the target off guard puts the spotlight on them in a moment of surprise and may force them to make a potentially unpopular decision.
5. It is within the experience of your own members, and they are comfortable with it. Members are more likely to carry out an action and make it successful if it is a type of action they are comfortable with.

When you can’t seem to move your primary target, you may consider tactics to get to secondary targets. Applying pressure to secondary targets ideally puts indirect pressure on your primary target—and increases your chances they’ll respond.

The following chart shows many potential secondary targets if your primary target is the employer.
On August 11, 2010, members of ATU Local 1415 were only 24 hours away from being locked out by Greyhound. Getting nowhere with the company, Local 1415 decided to put outside pressure on Greyhound by informing passengers of the impending lock out. Drivers put a flyer announcing service interruption due to the lock out on their dashboards, and some drivers left one in every seat of their bus. Greyhound was furious, but so were the riders when they learned that service interruptions would be the fault of the company for locking out workers—and not the union going on strike. Local 1415 President Ian Laird says this tactic turned the tides at the negotiating table.

Rallies

Gathering union members together with community partners for a rally can be a powerful and highly visible way to energize members and earn free media attention.

A rally by its nature depends on turnout—a significant turnout shows strength, while a poor turnout backfires with weakness. Turnout for a rally depends on personal communication—face-to-face and by phone. For these reasons, a rally should not be the first tactic you go to, but a capstone on a series of smaller actions that get attention and get members pumped up.

For internal use, develop an agenda and a list of key messages for all participants. Develop a schedule for the event that allows a brief time for each speaker. One person should be designated to welcome attendees and introduce the speakers. Walking through the event beforehand will help ensure everyone is comfortable.

Key rally planning tasks:

- Invite and confirm rally speakers.
- Reserve space for the event that is the right size—if it’s too large, a crowd will look small.
- Secure local government permits if necessary.
- Get the word out several weeks in advance through flyers, email, robo calls, newsletters, and personal calls and visits. Make turnout at least one person’s sole responsibility.
- Make sure there is sufficient audio equipment and for any crowd of more than 100, a riser for speakers so they can be seen.
- Podium signs and banners—for example, strategically placed signs reading, “We Are One ATU”—are essential.
- Assign security marshals and parking attendants if needed.
Passenger Advisory
Service Interruptions Ahead
Make Alternate Travel Arrangements

Greyhound has announced it will LOCK OUT Canadian drivers August 12

Greyhound Corp. of Dallas, Texas has demanded that drivers in Ontario and Quebec agree to major cuts in retirement benefits for newly hired drivers. The company says that if Ontario and Quebec employees will not promise to throw young workers under the bus by August 12, the company will LOCK OUT its employees.

For more information contact Ian Laird, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) 1415, (416) 599-1415
ATU Activists

An invitation to all members of ATU Local 123
You are the people you’ve been waiting for!

Our goal is to build a team of ATU members that will:

Establish effective two-way internal communication in our union
⇒ To be a strong union, we have to be able to communicate with each other. Both to keep members informed and to ensure that members’ voices help guide our union.

Organize around issues that are important for our members, and create opportunities for members to be active & involved
⇒ For example: mobilize our membership in response to Governor Kasich’s attack on workers through trips to Columbus, phone bank, leafleting

Build bridges with the community.
⇒ Now more than ever before, we need to be connected to the communities we serve and in which we live. We can’t stand alone as Local 123: we need riders, residents, neighbors and friends standing with us to ensure we have good jobs and a strong transit system.

If you want to be involved please contact:
Name
Email

You can also reach us by leaving a message at the ATU Local Office at xxx-xxx-xxxx
Bus Riders United Volunteer Sign-up

Name: 

Address: 

City: State: 

Phone: 

Email: 

- I would like to help Bus Riders United expand bus service in the SRTA system. I am able to help the campaign in the following ways. Please check all that apply

- Make phone calls to inform bus riders of public meetings or events
- Attend public meetings, events, & SRTA board meetings
- Gather post cards from my friends and family to improve bus service
- Distribute and collect postcards on the bus
- Participate in outreach and tabling at events
- Set up meetings for Bus Riders United to speak with different organizations (churches, clubs, sports teams, non-profits, etc.)
2011 THE YEAR THE ATU FIGHTS BACK

ATU MEMBER MOBILIZERS

What does it mean to be a Member Mobilizer? MMs are ATU members willing to volunteer to ensure that workers have a voice on the job, in the community and a voice in political process. MMs take action at the worksite, in our neighborhoods, on the phones, and via e-mail to:

- Educate members and their families
- Register members to vote
- Raise COPE funds
- Build community coalitions
- Recruit volunteers
- Organize Riders

The transit cuts keep coming. The layoffs seem endless. Fare increases push customers away. Legislative attacks undermine our rights to have good jobs and benefits. All of that is at risk if you don’t act now!

Will this crisis ever end? Only if we fight back, and THAT TIME IS NOW!

Fight back become a MEMBER MOBILIZER today!

Text “mobilize” to 69866

ATU MEMBER MOBILIZER

Sign-up Today

Name: __________________________
Address: _______________________

Local: __________________________
Home Phone: ____________________ Mobile Phone: ______________________
Email: __________________________ Receive Text Alerts: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Best Time to Volunteer: ☐ Weekdays ☐ Weekends ☐ AM ☐ PM
MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

An important aspect in developing an effective communications program is to develop some basic tools and infrastructure. This will allow you to communicate both internally to your membership and externally to the media, public officials and the general public. By creating an effective system of operations and a plan to communicate, you will become much more successful in developing basic outreach and building upon it over time. While it will take some work on the front end, your hard work will pay off quickly.

This infrastructure must include some simple, basic tools and materials that will help you to communicate better with your key audiences. These will include:

**Developing Strong Messages** – Message development is a crucial early step in communicating to key audiences about who you are and why your issues are important. Your key messages will provide the basis of all your communications.

Whether you’re talking to members, community partners, politicians or the media; good, strong messages persuade people to see things the way the messenger wants them to be seen. Good messages are about basic values everyone understands. They also must be clear, concise, and simple.

It’s also important that you frame your messages properly to appeal to your key audience. For example which of the following statements are more effective?

“Management committed an unfair labor practice,” or, “Management broke its promise and the law.”

“We’re fighting for better wages & pension” versus “to preserve transit service for passengers and our community.”

The second messages are stronger because they appeal to values and emotion, use everyday language and avoid jargon. These are critical and important factors to consider in developing your key messages.

Here are some key potential messages around ATU issues:

**Potential Messages:**

**Service cuts impact the local economy.**

Public transportation takes workers to their jobs and brings customers to businesses’ doors. In a time of economic recovery, we need to make sure that this vital economic circulation is taking place!

**Transportation is about equity.**

Everyone – the elderly, disadvantaged, disabled, and minorities – deserve equal, accessible, reliable public transportation that will get them safely to and from work, school and other daily tasks.

**A newsletter** - A regular newsletter is a good way to keep members informed about developments in the local, the community, and in the news. A good newsletter should include current news stories about topics of interest to your membership, upcoming union events, promote your message, update members on their local’s community campaign, highlight member activism, etc. It can be a simple design and content.

**E-Newsletter** – The content from your newsletter should be developed into a monthly e-newsletter. Everyone communicates via email these days and it’s a great way to communicate with your members. You should attempt to send these out on a regular basis (weekly, monthly, etc.), so your members start to expect to see them. It can also be posted on your website and on Facebook page.

**Regular Conference Calls** - Establishing a regular conference call with your members or activists is an effective way to communicate. Whether it’s weekly,
monthly or quarterly, it will help you to be more organized and get important messages out. These keep everyone informed and on schedule, which is especially important when you are organizing an event such as a rally. It’s also cost effective because there are many free conference call services such as www.freeconferencecall.com

Press Kit/Organizational Kit - A general press kit/organizational kit about your local is a very useful tool. It can be sent to reporters working on a story or distributed at any event at which media may be present. These kits could also be used when you meet with local politicians or other officials to introduce who your local is. An electronic version of the press kit should be uploaded to your website. The general kit should contain:

- Local officers
- Fact sheets
  - Mission statement
  - Local history
  - Background on memberships
    - Number of members
    - Industries/companies workers represent
  - Topics of expertise
  - Calendars of events
  - Newspaper clips
  - Any relevant reports, press releases and biographical information

Website – Every organization needs to have a website. It is a key vehicle for disseminating information and is likely the first place many people will look to learn more about your local and your issues. It needs to be written in clear language, be easy to navigate and include calls to action (and the tools to support those calls). It also should include some interactive elements.

If you don’t have a website you need to get one. It is easy to develop and doesn’t need to be complex. The International has developed an affiliate website program (TransitWeb) in which locals can request a free website. All the technical and design details will be handled for you. For more information, please email communications@atu.org.

It’s also critical that you update the content consistently. Members and visitors will come to your site more often you have new content.

Social Networking Media – Social media – like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube – continue to grow more and more in importance as communication tools, particularly for issue advocacy. In many ways it has become an essential tool in any campaign and for any organization to mobilize activists.

Social networking sites make reaching targeted audiences easier and faster and, with one click, they connect you with the networks of all of your “followers.”

Accounts should be established for each network to raise your profile or issue in the social networking community. These accounts are very easy to set up.

Strong Spokespeople

Once you have developed strong, clear and concise message that is half the battle. For our messages to be heard, it must be delivered by someone who is credible, well spoken, knowledgeable and relatable.

Members and most Canadians understand what it’s like to work for a living and they are more likely to believe messages delivered by workers. People can relate better to people like themselves, who work hard each and everyday to provide for their families. It’s putting a human face on our union that is just like their neighbor, friend or co-worker.

By putting the foundation of our union—our members who keep Canada moving—out front beside leaders, our message will be heard and believed.
MAKING HEADLINES: HOW TO GET MEDIA ATTENTION

News media is the biggest influence on our members, public officials and the general public when it comes to information. It is also one of the most significant opportunities we have to raise our visibility and add power to mobilization.

We have to remember that reporters, TV stations, bloggers, and other media are not our enemy. If used effectively, media can be a powerful medium to get our message out to our key audiences.

With a little work and some simple steps, every local has the ability to develop a public relations framework that will allow you to take maximize your news opportunities to build support for members and with public officials and the general public.

It is important to take advantage of natural opportunities to generate news stories. Do not underestimate a rally, charity event or even the election of new officers as potential for positive news coverage. Also you cannot expect coverage every time you have an event or put out a press release, but over time, reporters will grow more accustomed to working with you. Eventually it will pay off.

The following are important tools and tactics for developing a successful media relations program that will help you to generate media coverage.

Media Lists - Thorough and updated media lists are crucial for reaching the right reporters and audiences with your key messages. If you have a great rally planned, but the correct reporters and media outlets never hear about your event, then you will not get media coverage

Your media list should include reporters and media who write articles and cover on issues important to members—transit, jobs, the economy, continuing education, labor unions, environmental/green technology and any other issues in which ATU makes a difference. Media lists in each media market should include, but are not limited to:

- Daily newspapers
- Community newspapers
- TV networks – Almost every city has an CTV, CBC, ABC, CBS, NBC, and SUN Networks news stations.
- Radio networks – Every market has a main news station
- Trade Publications – This includes business journals, newsletters
- Internet news outlets
- Bloggers
- News wire service – Associated Press, Reuters, Bloomberg

Broadcast Email Network - Your media lists should be entered into a broadcast email service. There are many free or inexpensive email blast services such as Mail Chimp, iContact and others. With the touch of a button, it will allow you to send information to reporters and media outlets without your message ending up in junk mail.

Proactive Phone Contact - A press release must be reinforced with a follow-up phone call to ensure the media have received your message. Reporters receive dozens of press releases and pitches every day, so it takes considerable effort to make yours stand out from the crowd. Making pitch calls is a time-intensive activity that must be done to sell the story or event. Each time you email a release or advisory, you must follow up with calls to key reporters to ensure that they are aware of the story, to give them the opportunity to get more detailed information than is provided in a press release, and to set up interviews.

Establishing News Credibility/Regular Media Contact - A key part of developing a relationship with the media is regular contact. Aggressive media contact and emails will help to keep your local in the news and in reporters’ minds. With ongoing
contact, your local will become a recognized name to the media. As a result, if a story is being done on topics related to mass transit and labor, your local will be called as “news sources.” The news is cyclical – the more you go out and get the attention of reporters, the more credible the ATU becomes and the more you will be in the news.

**Responding to News of the Day** - By keeping a keen eye on what reporters are covering related to mass transit and other key issues, you can craft statements and releases to tie ATU and issue positions into relevant news stories.

**Media Interview Tips**

Media interviews are a great opportunity to get out our key messages to our audiences. At first these interviews may seem intimidating. But a few key tips will help you be prepared and with practice you will get better and better.

1. When talking with the media, remember that you are the expert. Do not worry about reporters asking questions that you can’t answer. You don’t have to answer every question.

    The following are a few general tips that will help prepare you for any interviews with print, TV, radio and bloggers.

    1. Be confident, relaxed and enthusiastic. While the reporter may be asking the question, what you say is totally controlled by you.

    2. Be sure to speak clearly - no mumbling! Try to keep your “ums” to a minimum. Especially with TV and radio.

    3. Listen to the question the reporter asks and take as much time as you would like to think about how to respond. There is no need to feel rushed.

    4. Whenever you are talking to a reporter, smile. Smiling projects enthusiasm for what you are doing and a desire to connect on a personal level with the audience.

    5. Speak in concise sentences. Try not to ramble. Producers and writers look for 7-10 second “sound bites” or quotes. Remember, reporters will not use everything you say, so if you stumble over your words a little, don’t sweat it! And if you are doing a taped TV or radio interview, feel free to ask if you can repeat your answer – they will edit the interview.

    6. If you don’t know the answer to a reporter’s question, it is completely okay to tell them that you don’t know the answer. Saying something like, “I’m sorry, I’m not sure,” is always better than guessing. If the reporter needs more information, just tell them you’ll get back to them.

    7. If you are doing a television interview, lean slightly towards the camera. If there is no reporter present, be sure to look straight at the camera when answering questions, otherwise your wandering eyes are distracting to viewers. If you have any questions, just ask the camera operator or reporters where to look.

**Off the Record?**

Unless you have a trusted relationship with a reporter, assume nothing is off the record. Even then, reporters will consider a conversation “on the record” and for use unless it is clear from the beginning of the conversation that what you say is “off the record” and not for use. Be clear about the ground rules before you talk.

**Op-eds and Letters to the Editor** – Op-eds (opinion pieces) and letters to the editor are a great way to get your messages out on key issues and react to news stories and developments in the community related to ATU issues. These should be written clearly and concisely. Each newspaper has
different guidelines for drafting and submitting op-eds and letters to the editor. You should check the newspaper’s website or call the editorial page. Here are some basic recommendations:

Editorial Board Meetings – Meeting with your local newspaper’s editorial page is an opportunity to make your argument on a key issue impacting ATU members and the community. It also should be a timely issue as well, which will help to get a meeting scheduled. These meeting can be arranged by calling the editorial page editor. You should only bring 2-3 people—an ATU leader and rank-and-file members—to these meeting as well as a press kit and other key materials that support your arguments/issues. The most important point to remember to emphasize in an editorial board meeting is how will this issue impact the people in your community.

CALENDAR TO GENERATE NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE OF AN EVENT

The following is a sample calendar of key steps to take in developing, planning and executing an effective media relations strategy around a media event such as a rally or march. If you need help or advice in organizing an event feel free to call the International office.

10 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF YOUR EVENT

Line up spokespeople and potential resources for reporters to interview. It might be yourself, as well as a rank-and-file member whom you’ve prepared and an ally outside the union who supports the union’s position.

Begin thinking about how the event is newsworthy—if it’s a rally, march, phone banking or other type of activism, there is likely to be a reporter who is interested in the event, or the issues behind it.

Update your media lists by checking to see who is writing on our key issues.

5 DAYS IN ADVANCE

Determine the best message. What would the headline be if you wrote it? How would a TV news anchor describe it?

From your perfect message, draft talking points—the headline you’d like, and the key facts and statements that support it.

Determine who delivers each part of your message.

Practice, and help other participants practice.

Draft a news advisory—a paragraph or so with the “who, what, when and where” and a contact name and number reporters can reach at any time. (See the sample Media Advisory Template).

4 DAYS IN ADVANCE

Prepare background information for reporters—fact sheets, bios of workers and leaders who will participate. These can be added to your media press kit.

Prepare a Q&A—the more you repeat your message in different ways and put it in reporters’ hands, the more likely it will become a part of their reports.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letters to editor</td>
<td>Day of or after</td>
<td>Under 250 words</td>
<td>Pithy, personal, moving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Op-Eds</td>
<td>Send morning, call afternoon</td>
<td>Under 700 words</td>
<td>Hook, 3-4 body pars w/1 point apiece, conclusion w/proposed solution or call to action</td>
</tr>
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3 DAYS IN ADVANCE

Confirm participants.
Review your message.

2 DAYS IN ADVANCE

Distribute the news advisory by email and fax to your list of reporters.

Call each reporter to confirm they received the advisory and pitch them to come cover your event.

THE DAY BEFORE

Fax and email the news advisory again.

Call each reporter again to determine if they will be attending or reporting on your news.

Prepare a news release to distribute the day of your news. See the sample News Release Template below.

DO IT THE MORNING OF

Call TV assignment desks and radio news directors before 8 a.m. and ask if they’re covering your news.

Fax and email advisory one last time.

FOLLOW-UP

Distribute your news release to those who attend your event; fax and email it to reporters who are not there.

MEDIA ADVISORY

A media advisory is a simple who, what, where, when, and why of a media event. It is briefer than a press release. The point is to give the media contact enough information to be interested in the event, without giving so much detail that they don’t feel the need to attend it.

The format for a media advisory is:

• MEDIA ADVISORY FOR [fill in date]
• Contact: [fill in contact name and number where contact can always be immediately reached]
• Main headline: BOLD AND IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS
• One sentence summarizing what is going to happen.
• WHAT: [repeat what will happen]
• WHEN: [insert time, day and date]
• WHERE: [insert exact location]
• WHO: [who is speaking at the event]
• [Insert a small amount of background—but don’t provide so much that a reporter wouldn’t have to attend the event to get the news.]
For Immediate Release
[date]

Contact: [name]
[phone number & email]

Rally to Save [YOUR CITY] Transit System, [DAY]
Coalition Calls on Citizens to Fight for Transit Funding
(Rally, TIME, DATE, LOCATION)

[CITY] – Protesting the worst cuts in the [TRANSIT SYSTEM NAME] transit system's history, passengers, workers, and transit advocates will join Amalgamated Transit Union International President Larry Hanley, [OTHER NOTED SPEAKER] and other community leaders at a rally to save transit in [YOUR CITY] on [DATE] at [TIME].

Most recently [TRANSIT SYSTEM NAME] has slashed Monday through Friday service, eliminated ALL Saturday service, and increased passenger fares. More cuts are being proposed for 2013. Those cuts could reduce [TRANSIT SYSTEM NAME] to only peak service hours on limited routes, or even kill the transit system in [TRANSIT SYSTEM NAME] entirely.

The transit coalition is calling on citizens to send the message to our local officials and politicians that cutting back bus service is not a sustainable solution.

WHAT: March & Rally to Save Our Transit System!
WHEN: [DATE * TIME]
WHERE: [LOCATION]
WHO: Larry Hanley, International President of the Amalgamated Transit Union

[OTHER SPEAKERS – LOCAL UNION PRESIDENT, POLITICANS, WORKERS, TRANSIT ADVOCATES]

About the ATU

The Amalgamated Transit Union is the largest labor organization representing transit workers in the United States and Canada. Founded in 1892, the ATU today is comprised of over 190,000 members in 264 local unions spread across 44 states and nine provinces, including 3,000 workers at Greyhound Lines, Inc. Composed of bus drivers, light rail operators, maintenance and clerical personnel and other transit and municipal employees, the ATU works to promote transit issues and fights for the interests of its hard-working members.
PRESS RELEASE

A press release is a written communication directed at members of the news media for the purpose of announcing something newsworthy. It should be clear and concise. The most two important elements of a press are strong, clever headlines and the news hook – the most important message – in your lead paragraph. Reporters get numerous press releases each day and only have time to read the headlines and lead. If it doesn’t catch their attention they ignore the rest of it and delete it.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 29, 2011

Transit Workers Set to Strike Friday
88 Percent Reject Acadian Contract Offer

Media Contact: Glen Carr President/Business Agent,
Local 1229 – 506-756-0279

Saint John, NB - Passengers may have a tough time traveling on Friday December 2, 2011. That’s when transit workers in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island are set to go on Strike. Members of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1229 gave their 72-hour notice to Acadian Coach Lines today after voting 88% to reject the company’s recent contract proposal.

“We do not want to strike, but Acadian management has left us no other option,” explains Glen Carr, President and Business Agent of ATU Local 1229. “We apologize for the disruption and inconvenience this will create for those who rely on us for their traveling needs and daily tasks.”

ATU Local 1229, which represent mechanics, maintenance, customer service representatives and bus drivers in New Brunswick and PEI, plan for the Strike to begin Friday morning at 6:30 am.

After months of asking for a complete contract, ATU finally received an offer last Friday November 25, 2011, from Acadian after pressure from the Mediator to do so. ATU Members were briefed on the contract and a secret ballot vote was taken November 27th & 28th 2011. The contract was overwhelming rejected by 88%.

“It was an insulting offer that was obviously cobbled together quickly,” Carr continued. “ATU members sent a loud and clear message to Acadian that we want to be treated with respect and fairness.

“We appreciate the support of the riders and customers and urge them to contact Acadian Coach Lines to demand they bargain fairly with ‘Results not Insults’ and settle this dispute,” Carr asserted. “We are willing to sit down with management to reach a Fair Settlement that is good for workers, management and most of all the public.”

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THE ART OF ADVOCACY

For meeting with elected officials, party leaders and other people in positions of power.

1. CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT. Don’t just walk in and expect to see an elected official. Make an appointment well in advance and specify what you will be talking about. This lets the official prepare for the meeting or delegate to the appropriate staff person. Don’t be upset if you are screened by a staff member first to find out as much as possible on your subject. Be forthright with the staff and be prepared to put in writing what the purpose of your meeting with that official will be.

2. BE ORGANIZED. Have an agenda to keep the meeting from going astray. Remember, the elected officials and their staffers will form an opinion of you, your group and perhaps your cause. Know your subject, don’t overstate your case, and maintain a businesslike manner.

3. IF YOU ARE GOING AS A GROUP, KEEP IT SMALL AND HAVE A PRE-MEETING. Always take time to plan your meeting to ensure a smooth presentation. Decide who will present each topic. Choose a leader to direct the conversation and see that your agenda is followed. This is an instance where there is no strength in numbers.

4. ALWAYS BE A GOOD LISTENER. What the elected official will say can provide insight into strategy for follow-up or suggest who needs to be included in another meeting. Remember, the official needs to have his or her point of view understood as much as you do. Being attentive to his or her concerns and issues does not mean you have to agree or compromise your position. Leave time for questions.

5. BE ON TIME AND DON’T OVERSTAY YOUR ALLOTED TIME. If an elected official asks you to continue, do so. But, remember they run on very tight schedules. If you are well organized, you can cover the critical aspects of your case in a limited time.

6. DON’T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR SOMETHING. Don’t merely ask for “support” – ask for something specific. Don’t leave without asking to whom else you should be talking. Make sure you see them too.

7. DON’T BE AWED. Sure, it’s an important job, but elected officials are people just like you. It’s highly likely they won’t understand your issue as well as you do – not because they’re dumb or don’t care, but because they must be “generalists” on a wide range of issues. Discuss the issue; don’t lecture.

8. LEAVE FACT SHEETS – SHORT ONES. Emphasize the impact of programs or legislation on the elected official’s constituents. Make sure your facts can be verified; if you quote numbers, be able to back them up. Offer to provide more information as requested.

9. NO POLITICIAN IS ABLE TO MAKE A COMMITMENT ON THE SPOT. The best you can do is say “I hope to hear from you soon.” After you leave the office, go someplace immediately and write down what the official said, before you forget.

10. REMEMBER TO SAY “THANK YOU” WITH A SMALL NOTE. Always—no matter how the meeting went—thank the staff member and/or legislator for the time.
**Story of Self, Us and Now:**

A good story is what motivates people to action. When talking to people outside the union, including elected officials, it is important to explain why we hold the values we have (Self), the reasons why collective, purposeful work in the union is necessary (Us), and what needs to be done together (Now) to create meaningful long-term change. Our Story of Self, Us, and Now is our Public Narrative. Our stories explain who we are as people, why the work we do is so important and exactly what needs to be done to improve the lives of our working families.

**Potential Topics of a Conversation with a Candidate**

- What are your plans for developing the nation’s transit infrastructure in the coming years? Why do you think investing in our transit system is important?
- Have you ever used public transit as your main means of getting around?
- What do you think a “good job” means to our members? What does it mean to you?
- Do you support the fundamental right of workers to join together in a union without employer interference?
- Do you know any ATU members personally?
- What value will our members and our union add to your campaign? What role will ATU play if you are elected?
- How have you supported organizing drives in the past? What will you do to level the playing field so workers can exercise their right to join a union?
- Do you support collective bargaining rights for public employees?

**GETTING GRASSROOTS**

The more groups support an issue from a variety of perspectives, the more strength the ATU has. Sometimes the media or an elected official won’t deal with an issue that is brought to them by an ATU local, yet will work well with another person or organization supporting the ATU’s position. Statements from the ATU may be seen as self-serving. Despite the union’s concern for transit service and funding, the ATU is often seen as being concerned only with job security. Another organization’s concern for the continuation of vital transit service may be received more readily.

Building coalitions adds strength to the ATU’s position and puts additional pressure on decision-makers who want to respond to their constituencies. If elected officials perceive that their proposed changes in public policy are being opposed only by a few disgruntled employees and their union, they will probably proceed. If, however, they are bombarded with letters, postcards, petitions, visits, telephone calls, and news articles calling attention to and opposing their proposals, they may be convinced to change course.

**Showing constituent power:**

To show state and local officials that a substantial number of their constituents support the ATU’s position, you and your member mobilizers can organize:

- Letter writing campaigns. Personal letters are always more effective than form letters
- Postcard campaigns
- Petitions
- Crowd support at hearings, community meetings and other public events
- Statements of support from other official bodies
- Media – letters to the editor, op-ed pieces, press statements, etc
• Visual tools--buttons, bumper stickers, etc.
• Letters of support from influential people/organizations
• Discussions at public meetings or forums
• Expert testimony at committee hearings or county board/city council meetings
• Telephone calls
• And most important of all, one-to-one meetings with elected officials at their offices or public events.

Registering members to vote

Voter registration is important because it helps the union exercise its voice at the ballot. Your target list will be the list of voters who need to update their registration (because, for example, they moved) and those who are not registered.

1.) Learn the rules for your province, including deadlines, so that your Local Union can collect and deliver voter registration applications.

2.) Obtain voter registration forms and reach out to your target list in each of these ways:
   • By holding special events and making voter registration part of the event.
   • By making voter registration a topic in union meetings and for job stewards.
   • With voter registration phone banks and neighborhood walks.
   • With a registration card in the mail.
   • With registration information by email.
   • With a robo-call reminder.
   • With registration information and links to registration sites on your Local Union website.

Running an effective Phone Bank

Phone banks are a set of phones and phone lines dedicated to political mobilization. They are a multi-purpose tool for improving members’ awareness of issues and encouraging mobilization and political action. Phone banking can also be used to put pressure on local politicians.

1. Identify the goal of the phone bank
2. Identify targets based on the goal
3. Collect the necessary phone numbers. You may want to target members in key districts.
4. Determine location and equipment (phones can be leased to set up a phone bank, or large quantities of phone lines may be available from other unions or businesses).
5. Recruit volunteers by getting the word out two or three weeks in advance. Try to recruit volunteers who can speak the language that members speak, if necessary.
6. Create a simple schedule so volunteers can sign up for time slots. Limit the time commitment to less than 3 hours.
7. Put together packets for volunteers with the caller’s list of numbers, the script, and report sheets.
8. Consider providing snacks or refreshments for volunteers and thank them for their time.

Encourage volunteers to stick to the script, and only talk to those people whom are named on the list. Let volunteers know that not everyone will be receptive to their call. They shouldn’t take it personally, but be polite and move on.
Sample Phone Script

Hello, may I please speak to [name on list]? My name is [caller’s name] and I’m calling from ATU Local 123. Your local is fighting the service cuts that will cost the union jobs, leave passengers stranded, and hurt the economy. I am calling today to ask you to please let your local politicians know you oppose these cuts. Can I connect you with your local representative?

Writing to elected officials

Most elected officials will tell you that a well-written letter from a constituent is one of the most influential ways of communicating with them. A good letter clearly and concisely spells out why you, as a constituent, are interested in a particular issue.

Here are some additional suggestions:

• Be sure that the Member of Parliament or Minister’s name and title are correct.

• Keep your letter to only one page. You don’t need to be an expert. Simply demonstrating your concern is just as effective.

• Be polite and cover only one issue in your letter. Use your own words; don’t use jargon or unfamiliar acronyms.

• Type your letter if possible but make your letter personal. If using a form letter, add your own thoughts. Politicians receive many form letters – make yours unique and it will catch their attention. Form letters will receive form replies.

• Be sure to include the action you would like the Member of Parliament or his government to take.

• Ask a question, the recipient of your letter will be more inclined to send a prompt response.

• When writing on behalf of your organization, tell your elected official about your organization – what you do, how many people you serve, etc.

• Be encouraging. If your elected official has taken a stand that favours your position, let your appreciation be known and thank him/her.

• While it is important to write your elected official, always send a copy to the responsible Minister as they have the power to change laws, regulations, policies or programs and need to hear from citizens directly. Similarly, when writing directly to a Minister, copy your local MP.

• Sign your letter above your typed or printed name and address. Envelopes sometimes get detached, so it’s best to include your address on the inside, too.

It is always helpful to figure out a way to make your elected officials feel good about supporting the ATU. Everyone wants to support a worthwhile cause.

Confronting elected officials in public

If you’re having trouble getting an elected official’s attention, you may want to get creative and confront them at their fundraisers, district meetings, press conferences, parades, homes and churches. Below are a few ideas for getting to these elected officials when they aren’t making it easy by agreeing to meet with you:

• Sign up on the elected official’s office and/or campaign email list. Regularly check his or her office/campaign website, Twitter feed, and Facebook group

• Search Google and newspaper websites for public appearances. Regularly check newspapers, community calendars and other websites.
• **Allies.** Ask allied groups and political activists for intelligence on candidates’ schedules. Many groups plan bird-dogging events and might have the scoop on an upcoming event.

• **Political parties.** Subscribe to party email lists, which often share upcoming events.

• **Donors.** Review lists of the candidate’s donors to see if you can find someone who will be willing to pass on information and invitations to you.

• **Media.** Find friendly members of the media to get info from. Some reporters would like progressive ideas to be part of the political debate.

• **Research their social network.** Through in-district activists, online information sources and past donations, find out where the candidate lives, goes to church, has club membership, or where their kid goes to school and what school functions the candidate might attend. Source: *Finding MOC’s when they don’t want to be found*, usaction.org

**Providing route information for Election Day**

If your riders are taking public transit to work, school, doctor’s appointments and other daily activities, chances are they are going to need to take public transit to the polls as well. Consider preparing route information for polling stations, and making them available a few months before Election Day. This information should be non-partisan; it should not promote a candidate or party but simply give voters information on how to reach the polls via public transit. If your employer allows it, pass this information out on the bus. You can also get volunteers to hand out flyers in target neighborhoods and downtown metro areas. Making an activity like reaching a polling station by bus easier increases the chance that registered voters will act on that information. It also helps promote equity in voter turnout.

**Neighborhood walks**

Neighborhood walks have long been a key tactic in voter turnout efforts on Election Day. They are also crucial in everyday political and organizing efforts because they facilitate the most effective communication— member-to-member and face-to-face.

Here’s a checklist for a successful neighborhood walk:

1. Target your members. Which constituencies have the heaviest concentrations of members and are most efficient to walk? Which constituencies also have a high concentration of undecided voters?

2. At least three weeks ahead of time, begin volunteer recruitment. Recruit every day and use every communication method available including mail, email, phone calls, and notices on your Local Union website and in the Local Union hall.

3. Develop walk packets for each volunteer—a route map, a partner (never send volunteers out alone), names and addresses of members to be visited, an approximate length of time it will take to complete the route, and the materials to be used or distributed.

4. Always pair an inexperienced walker with an experienced walker.

5. Include in packets, and review with walkers, a few bullet points on what kind of conversation to have with members, and remind them to only visit those homes on their lists.

6. Designate the Local Union hall or other gathering point as an operations center for walkers.

7. Collect a cell phone number for each pair in case of emergencies or if assistance is needed.

8. Collect information after walkers are finished, including a verbal debrief.
9. Let volunteers know that not everyone will be receptive to their visit. They shouldn’t take it personally, but be polite and move on.

Guidelines for talking to members about politics

1. Issues come first, candidates and parties second.
2. Members want information, not voting instructions.
3. Present information credibly and objectively to overcome members’ distrust of politics.
4. Downplay partisan rhetoric and stress the union’s role as an independent voice for working families.
5. Stress that unions should be watchdogs that hold politicians accountable.
6. Members want unions to represent their interests as workers.
7. Union political action should always be “of, by and for” the members.
8. Information is key to increasing participation.
9. Members are best reached by face-to-face visits.
10. We’re more effective when we address the concerns of specific audiences, instead of relying on a “one-size-fits-all” approach.

Listen to the issues that your members care about.

Making Transit an Issue in Races for Office

When the issue of privatization started bubbling up in the 2010 Toronto Mayoral race, ATU Local 113 responded by coalition-building and a variety of creative actions to get public attention on the issue. They reached out to dozens of groups with a stake in reliable public transit—environmental advocates, senior groups, minority rights organizations, student groups, social activists, other unions and many more. The Public Transit Coalition (PTC) launched a major multimedia campaign with a very simple message: privatizing public transit will be a disaster for Toronto.

Together, the PTC had the resources set up a website, produce a video and buy advertising. However, the coalition also used some low-cost tactics to inform the public about each candidate’s plans for Toronto’s transit system.

The PTC released a report card that graded candidates running for Mayor of Toronto on the issue of public transit. Each candidate was sent a ten-question survey on a range of transit-related issues such as: keeping the TTC public, building the Transit City Light Rail Plan and keeping fares in check through a sustainable operating subsidy for the TTC from the City and the Province. The survey was sent to all registered candidates, and the PTC repeatedly contacted candidates who had not responded, encouraging them to fill out the survey. These report cards were used to educate the riding public about each candidate’s stance on transit, and made transit a hot issue in the race.

On the following page: Conservative mayoral candidate Rob Ford had a hard time responding to the questionnaire sent out by the PTC. Instead of answering question, Mr. Ford’s campaign manager wrote a letter defending his pro-privatization stance—and received a failing grade from the PTC.
Dear members of the Public Transit Coalition,

Thank you, very much, for your interest in Rob's transit plans. Unfortunately, the structure of your questionnaire assumes Transit City is the only solution to meet Toronto’s transit requirements. This is not the case, so we'll provide you with a narrative response rather than trying to shoe-horn Rob's plans into the template you've provided.

Rob's Balanced Transportation Plan will be published before the end of summer and includes a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of Toronto’s transit users, cyclists, motorists, commercial vehicle operators, pedestrians and joggers.

Congestion is a major issue facing everyone in Toronto. It contributes to pollution, the loss of billions of dollars in productivity and a reduced quality of life for all. Unfortunately, Mayor Miller's Transit City plan does nothing to address the congestion problem in Toronto. In fact, Transit City will increase congestion and pollution and reduce quality of life for residents forced to use this means of public transit. Putting streetcar tracks down the centre of Toronto's busiest roadways will increase congestion and travel times for all Torontonians. Streetcars are too slow and do nothing to improve access to high quality jobs for transit users living outside the downtown core. While some Transit City advocates like to call these vehicles "LRT" the reality is, they're just fancier streetcars.
The public transit portion of Rob's Transportation Plan will be affordable, deliverable within five years and based on subways. It will improve transit times for users, extending their ability to live in one part of the city and work in another, and it will reduce traffic congestion. Rob's plan is fully funded using a combination of public financing from other levels of government and private sector funds. It will not require an increase in taxes or the imposition of road tolls.

Rob will work with the province to declare the TTC an essential service and will not privatize the TTC. He will include private sector leaders on the TTC board, in addition to fiscally-responsible and experienced city councillors.

Rob is a strong champion for transparency and accountability in government. He will bring this quality to the City of Toronto and would support the same at all levels of government and in all public-sector and arms-length agencies.

The TTC must also improve its customer service and the cleanliness of its stations and vehicles. This does not have to cost more money -- all it requires is strong leadership and accountability from management. Rob will work with TTC management to ensure this is done.

Yours,

Mark

--

Mark Towhey
Director, Policy
Rob Ford for Mayor 2010