

# Transit Riders Union



2021 highlights

## Taking on Big Tech's Monopoly Power

Amazon's growing monopoly power impacts all of us, but it often feels invisible. With our members and broader base, TRU is connecting the dots between monopoly power and the problems we face everyday: workers' lack of power on the job, small businesses struggling, communities' well-being dependent on the whims of mega-corporations.

With antitrust in the news, people want to know: What is a monopoly? What are the dangers of monopoly, and how are we impacted? And most importantly, what can we do about it? In January, TRU co-hosted a teach-in with Puget Sound Sage, with special guests from the Washington State Attorney General's Office Antitrust Division, to dig into these timely questions. As an active member of the Athena coalition, TRU is part of a national movement to combat Amazon's growing monopoly power.



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## Fighting for Renter Protections across King County

Housing is a human right. TRU's major campaign effort this year centered around preventing mass evictions due to the COVID-19 rental debt crisis. We built a powerhouse countywide coalition of over 50 groups and organized with renters across King County to win both emergency measures like eviction moratoriums and permanent renter protections that will help reduce evictions and homelessness for decades to come. Our organizing and pressure won:



- Local eviction moratoriums in the cities of Seattle, Kenmore, Kirkland and Burien.
- Seattle legislation closing the "lease loophole" in Seattle's Just Cause Eviction Ordinance; creating a defense to eviction for COVID rental debt; and banning school year evictions of families and educators.
- A pathbreaking package of renter protections for unincorporated areas of King County, including strong Just Cause protections; caps on move-in fees and late fees; 120 days notice of significant rent increases; and the right to apply for a rental home without a Social Security Number.

This work continues this fall, as the Delta variant is raging, hundreds of thousands of Washington residents lost unemployment benefits on Labor Day, and most emergency renter protections are set to expire Sept. 30.

## TRU's Transit Fairy

Founding TRU member Pauline Van Senus was profiled in [The Seattle Times](#) for her tireless volunteer efforts to clean up around transit stops:

“My goal is to make bus stops comfortable for everybody,” she said. “Seattle is my hometown. I want it to be beautiful.”



Stepping Up  
Seattle's 'Transit Fairy'  
beautifies bus stops during  
the COVID-19 pandemic

## Unmasking false compassion and false solutions to homelessness



Early this year, big business lobby groups launched a cynical effort called “Compassion Seattle” to force the city to be more aggressive about sweeping homeless encampments—a cruel and pointless practice when there is not nearly enough affordable housing and shelter. Their proposed amendment to the city charter pretended to offer solutions to the homelessness crisis but conflicted with state and regional planning efforts and identified no new funds for the costly actions it mandated.

(In fact, the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, one of Compassion Seattle’s main backers, is suing the city to try to overturn the JumpStart Seattle tax on large corporations, which TRU played a large role in winning last year and which represents a major new funding source for housing and homelessness.)

TRU joined the House Our Neighbors coalition to help educate Seattle residents about the root causes and real solutions to homelessness. Then we teamed up with the ACLU of Washington and the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness to bring a lawsuit against “Compassion Seattle” — and we won! The measure will no longer appear on ballots this November.

## Candidate forums on transportation, equity & the environment



TRU coordinates the MASS (Move All Seattle Sustainably) Coalition with transportation and climate allies that organize and advocate to make our city sustainable and better for people walking, rolling, biking and riding transit. Together we hosted two candidate forums this spring so that our members and the public could hear directly from the Mayoral and City Council candidates about their transportation and climate plans and commitments.

## Organizing for a Solidarity Budget — again!



TRU is a core member of the Solidarity Budget coalition, which grew out of last year’s racial justice uprisings in the wake of George Floyd’s murder. This year, the coalition has done outreach to communities and organizations with a stake in the Seattle City Budget process, and we’ve put together a “Base Budget” proposal that reflects the investments we believe our city’s residents need in

housing and human services, transportation, green jobs, childcare and more. We’ll be pushing for new progressive revenue and to divest from harmful policing practices to direct funds to things people need.

## Encampment Outreach

TRU’s volunteer camp outreach team has continued cooking weekly meals, delivering supplies such as water, batteries, clothing and propane, and building relationships with people living unsheltered in Seattle. TRU collects individual donations from our members and broader supporters specifically to fund this member-driven project.

