

TRU VISION 2026:



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01

SUMMARY

The Transit Riders Union (TRU) 2026 priorities workshops embodied something powerful about the Transit Riders Union: **our membership is diverse, energetic, imaginative, and deeply committed to shaping a more just transportation system.** Over three workshops, members proposed and discussed an extraordinary range of ideas—some hyper-local, some regional, some systemic, some highly technical. The breadth of proposals reflected the richness of TRU’s very expansive and comprehensive approach to transit justice. The breadth of proposals demonstrated that TRU is not a single-issue organization—it is a community of riders and advocates with a wide range of passions and expertise. Because of this diversity of insight, knowledge, and passion, it became clear that ranking priorities or identifying “top” issues for 2026 would not reflect who we are. TRU is not a hierarchical organization that dictates a narrow, rigid agenda from the top down. Instead, our strength lies in our ability to let members—individually, collectively, or in groups of varying sizes—direct our work, pursue the issues they care about (when they care about them), and build campaigns that reflect their lived realities. The campaigns can be cultivated over months, or emerge on the spur of the moment.

Therefore, **rather than forcing a contentious, and likely problematic ranking method, we chose a different approach: we identified larger themes—strategic umbrellas—that capture a richer, fuller spectrum of opportunities TRU and its members can pursue in 2026.** This provides a large array of options for members to take the lead on and organically prioritize what they care about, rather than restricting our membership to any specific projects. Hopefully, this thematic structure honors the diversity of member interests and makes space for multiple projects to advance at once. It also preserves TRU’s ability to align our work with our actual capacity in the moment. Moreover, by emphasizing themes, rather than specific actions or initiatives, we leverage a defining feature of TRU’s organizing culture: we can respond quickly and effectively to emerging issues. Over the years, TRU has stepped into new fights at critical moments—whether responding to sudden service cuts, harmful policy proposals, or coalition opportunities. This responsiveness is a defining feature of TRU’s organizing culture and a strength we must preserve.

This framework positions TRU to pursue the issues, causes, problems, priorities, initiatives, projects, and/or whatever creative ideas that members—or even a solo member—is passionate about and want to take the lead on that would:

- ☐ **Lead on Vision Zero and safety,**
- ☐ **Shape transit funding at city and county levels,**
- ☐ **Advance housing justice, immigrant rights, progressive government, and disability justice,**
- ☐ **Strengthen our membership, structure, and organizational capacity,**
- ☐ **Build a more just, accessible, climate-aligned transportation system.**

The following report, compiling the conversations we had and the information we shared during our priorities workshops, builds out that framework. Every idea raised in the workshops has been woven into the themes that emerged from our collective brainstorming, providing a synthesis of discussions, conclusions, and strategic implications for the year ahead.

Finally, enormous thanks must be given to Camille Gix, Avery Gottesman, and Jay Austin for their support in facilitating the workshops; TRU's General Council for their guidance and knowledge, and most importantly to all the members who contributed their time, thoughts, input, questions, and feedback.

02

TRANSIT PRIORITIES

Transit is the heart of TRU’s mission, and the 2026 transit priorities reflect both practical and visionary ideas. Members spoke about the daily realities of unreliable buses, unsafe streets, inaccessible stations, and confusing rider information. They also spoke about the long-term structural changes needed to build a transit system worthy of a growing, diverse, climate-conscious region. Across all three meetings, several themes emerged:

- A. Safety is non-negotiable: Vision Zero is imperative for our transit system.**
- B. Funding is foundational: Strong city and county measures are critical.**
- C. System-wide improvements matter, but isolated fixes are also needed.**
- D. TRU should play a stronger role in accountability for policies and policy achievements.**
- E. Transit must work for everyone.**

A. Safety is non-negotiable: Vision Zero is imperative for our transit system.

Safety was a resonant theme across all meetings, and one workshop identified Vision Zero as the top priority, reflecting the understanding that safety and reliability are intertwined. Members spoke about the daily fear of crossing Rainier Ave, the frustration of biking through Pike and Pine, preventable pedestrian deaths, and the need to reclaim public space from cars. The call for ***Rainier Ave safety improvements*** came up repeatedly, along with ***Pike Pine Streetscape & Bicycle Improvements***, ***Lake Washington Blvd safety improvements***, and the ***pedestrianization of Pike Place***. Members also pushed TRU to think strategically in shifting the narrative to ***classify pedestrian safety as public safety or public health*** as a strategy to engender political will and better resource allocation. There were also proposals for ***better bus lanes on Rainier, Aurora, and MLK*** and improving safety on ***high-injury corridors*** like MLK, Rainier, Aurora, and 99.

B. Funding is foundational: Strong city and county measures are critical.

Members were clear: ***funding is the backbone of everything TRU wants to achieve***. The renewal and improvement of the ***Seattle Transit Measure (STM)*** is urgent, and while TRU may not control the final shape of the measure, members agreed that TRU must remain engaged in campaigning for its renewal. The ***countywide transit measure*** was seen as equally important—a once-in-a-decade opportunity to expand service, improve safety, and address

regional inequities. Members also raised concerns about ***diverted STBD/STM funds***, calling for accountability and restoration for these funds.

C. System-wide improvements matter, but isolated fixes are also needed.

Across the workshops, members demonstrated TRU’s commitment to improving the daily experience of riders while maintaining a strategic focus on system-wide change. On the one hand, members proposed systems-level priorities including ***increased bus service***, ***more transit frequency***, and a ***stronger overall network*** that moves beyond the outdated hub-and-spoke model. Members want TRU to help shape the future of regional transit—not just react to it. There were calls for TRU to influence long-term planning to ***decrease delays on ST3***; ***advocate for ST4***; improve ***ST Express routing***, ***east-west routes***, and ***network connectivity***. Members also raised concerns about ***battery-electric buses***, questioning whether current investments reflect genuine climate progress or “greenwashing.” There was discussion about ***the 5-Line*** to have a high-frequency light rail corridor connecting Renton to Downtown Seattle. A proposal for a ***system-wide transit audit***—a long-standing but capacity-challenged idea—was framed as a safety issue: a way to identify systemic failures that put riders at risk.

On the other hand, while members agreed that TRU should avoid spreading itself thin across dozens of route-specific fights, several items emerged as important local opportunities. The ***L8 improvements***, already supported by an executive order, were seen as a springboard for broader advocacy on routes ***3/4, 7, 44, and the E Line***. Members also raised concerns about the ***62 relocation***, the need to ensure that Metro uses the ***Route 2 mini bus lane***, and long-standing issues with the ***SR520/Montlake interchange***. The ***Judkins Park freeway ramp (Alternative 4)*** and ***Mt Baker Station area improvements*** were also suggested as worthwhile multimodal projects. Members also highlighted the need to ***get RapidRide R back on track*** and ***extending RapidRide D to Northgate***.

D. TRU should play a stronger role in accountability for policies and policy achievements.

Members expressed a strong desire for TRU to play a more formal watchdog role—monitoring agencies, tracking commitments, and holding institutions accountable. The issue of ***“Fares Required” signs***—and Metro’s slow response—was emblematic of broader frustrations. Members also raised concerns about ***parking enforcement***, ***bus lane violations***, and the need for ***operator citation power*** (with safeguards against surveillance). Finally, the idea of a ***Metro/Sound Transit watchdog committee*** received traction, with some members volunteering for such a committee.

E. Transit must work for everyone.

Access and affordability must be incorporated into all of TRU’s transit work—especially for disabled riders, elders, and low-income riders. The ***Transit Benefits Survey*** was seen as a key tool for data-driven advocacy to increase access. Members also highlighted the need to ***modernize the KC Taxi Scrip Program*** and ***improve onboarding rider experience***. The idea of ***Free Transit for All*** surfaced as a long-term vision—something TRU should begin researching internally, even if it is not a 2026 campaign.

03

INTERSECTIONAL PRIORITIES

TRU’s intersectional priorities reflect the understanding that transit justice is inseparable from housing stability, immigrant rights, disability justice, public safety, and economic equity. Members proposed and engaged with a wide range of intersectional issues, each reflecting the lived realities of riders whose lives are shaped by more than just transit schedules. Rather than treating these issues as separate from transit, members framed them as part of a holistic vision for a just city—one where people can live, move, work, and thrive without fear, displacement, or exclusion.

A. Housing Justice and Tenant Rights

Housing emerged as one of the strongest intersectional themes. TRU Members spoke passionately about the need to protect renters, ***expand social housing***, and ensure that land-use decisions support transit riders. Under this theme, members discussed the ***Redmond tenant protections*** campaign, and the ***ban junk fees*** efforts in partnership with Stay Housed Stay Healthy and the Mayor’s Office. Members also raised the need for additional ***Seattle Tenant Protections***, ***banning RUBS***, and ensuring a strong ***Seattle Comprehensive Plan update***, including corridor upzones. These items reflect TRU’s commitment to linking transit and housing justice.

B. Immigrant Justice, Anti-Surveillance, and Civil Rights

The workshops reaffirmed TRU’s commitment to immigrant justice, emphasizing the importance of ***Resolution 197***, the need to defend communities from ICE, and TRU’s broader equity agenda. There was also significant interest and discussion about advocating for the ***removal of surveillance cameras***—especially those connected to the Axon Integrated Platform—and the ***De-Ice Campaign*** with SEIU. Discussions about these topics reflected deep concerns about data privacy and policing, as part of TRU’s efforts to ensure safety for communities who are particularly vulnerable during the current attack on ***civil rights*** by the federal government. Members also highlighted the need for ***transit passes for immigrant communities***, especially in South Seattle.

C. Effective, Progressive Government

Discussion during the workshops included strategies about TRU's political influence, including how we can impact ***elections***. They mentioned TRU's early endorsement of Ron Davis and leveraging our influence for broader reforms, including ***progressive revenue***, ***congestion pricing***, ***public funding for local news***, and reassessing ***golf courses*** for public benefit.

D. Accessibility and Disability Justice

Members emphasized the need for TRU to incorporate accessibility and disability into all of our advocacy. Potential initiatives included advocating for ***proactive accessibility planning***, especially for major events like Seahawks games, the World Cup, and parades. The lack of paratransit access and the need for an ADA coordinator who plans proactively—not just handles complaints—were major concerns. The proposal to monitor ***Sound Transit's vertical conveyances***—elevators and escalators—was seen as important for accessibility, especially given vendor instability. Members also discussed new opportunities for legal advocacy under Washington's new program allowing non-lawyers to practice law. While the timeline is unclear, members expressed interest in exploring this to increase access to legal advocacy for tenants and disabled riders.

04

ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

In discussing organizational priorities, participants at all three workshops focused largely on TRU's internal, institutional capacity-building needs. Members emphasized that TRU's ability to win external campaigns depends on strengthening internal systems, building a diverse and engaged membership, and clarifying roles and processes. Critically, these priorities are not separate from TRU's external work—they are the foundation that makes that work possible.

A. Membership Engagement and Community Building

Members expressed a desire for TRU to feel less like a campaign machine and more like a community. They proposed *stronger onboarding*, *branding* (yellow hats and shirts), *engagement metrics*, ongoing involvement opportunities, work sessions, volunteer incentives, and personalized outreach. Recommendations for *more member events*—neighborhood gatherings, speaker events, volunteer drives, even TRU meetings on buses or trains—reflected a desire to build a vibrant, connected membership.

B. Clearer Internal Structure and Institutional Knowledge

Members identified several needs for TRU's transition from a founder-led organization. Proposals included *archiving best practices*, *succession planning*, *clearer chain of command*, *defined committee roles*, and the creation of *TRU's Foundational Transit Principles*. Members generally agreed that TRU's needs stronger infrastructure and clearer policies. Members proposed a *structured system for TRU representatives to engage* with coalitions, schools, unions, and elected officials. A *liaison pool* with regular meetings is currently in development. Members agreed that *financial stability* should be a priority for the General Manager. Additionally, members raised the need for *quicker proposal voting*, a *membership transit pass program*, and *advocacy for the Seattle Library Levy*.

C. Technology, Communication, and Outreach

There were also specific requests that members believe would improve the organization. The need for *better, more accessible technology* was frequently mentioned at all the workshops. Other asks were *improved publicity and marketing*, *better internal communication platforms* (including Signal tags and channels), and a *grievance committee/ombudsman initiative*.

05

CONCLUSION

The TRU 2026 Vision Plan represents the priorities of a membership that is bold, imaginative, and deeply committed to transit justice: in multiple interconnected ways. It captures the full breadth of what our members brainstormed in three priorities workshops: a desire for safer streets, stronger transit funding, deeper housing protections, immigrant and disability justice, progressive government, and a more resilient, more connected organization. But this plan is not simply a catalog of ideas: it is a roadmap for how TRU will move forward together.

A. Moving Forward: How We Will Bring This Vision to Life

In the year ahead, TRU will use these themes as guideposts for action. They will help shape our committee agendas, inform our coalition work, and identify where to invest our limited staff capacity. They will also help us recognize when a new opportunity or threat aligns with our values and demands a response. Because we chose themes rather than rankings, TRU remains flexible—able to pursue multiple projects at once, able to pivot when needed, and able to support member-led initiatives as they arise. Our next steps include:

- Strengthening our internal systems so members can plug in more easily,
- Building coalitions around the most urgent and high-impact campaigns,
- Preparing for major funding measures and long-range transit planning processes,
- Ensuring that equity and accessibility remain at the center of everything we do.

B. Call to Members: Step Forward, Take Ownership, Lead the Work

TRU has always been strongest when members step up to lead. The victories in our history—from tenant protections to transit funding—came from members who saw a need, gathered others around them, and pushed forward with creativity and determination. This plan is an invitation to continue doing that, and more. If a priority or project in these pages speaks to you—whether it is a corridor safety fight, a tenant protection campaign, a disability justice initiative, or an internal organizational improvement—**we want and need you to take ownership of it.** You do not need to be an expert. You do not need to have years of organizing experience. You simply need to care, to show up, and to be ready to fight for transit justice.

Remember, TRU is a member-powered organization. That means:

- *You can start a project.*
- *You can join a committee.*
- *You can lead a campaign.*
- *You can bring others with you.*

And when you do, TRU will have your back: with staff support, with training, with resources, and with a community that believes in you.