



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, February 4th, 2022

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Bee-Line Riders, Advocates Release New Report to Commemorate Transit Equity Day

Transportation Advocacy Groups, Riders, and Westchester Elected Officials Come Together to discuss the importance of making the Bee-Line more equitable and accessible for all

[*LINK TO VIRTUAL PRESS CONFERENCE RECORDING HERE*](#)

New Rochelle, New York – On Friday, February 4th, Tri-State Transportation Campaign celebrated Transit Equity Day by holding a virtual press conference to release [a collection of rider stories and report on questionnaire data collected from Bee-Line riders](#). They were joined by riders, elected officials from the New York State Senate and Westchester County Legislative offices, as well as advocates from TransitCenter, Community Voices Heard, Riders Alliance, and the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA.

Transit Equity Day, a day celebrated by transit advocates, community organizations, and transit labor unions across the country, commemorates the life and legacy of Rosa Parks—she declared that public transit is a civil right when she refused to give up her seat on the bus to demand an end to segregation in the Montgomery, Alabama transit system. We recognize this act of resistance to highlight the rights to accessible, safe, equitable, and sustainable public transportation to **all** riders.

Tri-State Transportation Campaign launched the #BetterBeeLine campaign with a Westchester Bus rider questionnaire, asking riders questions about their experience commuting on Bee-Line to further inform the County about what riders need today. Through their analysis, TSTC found that riders want and need:



- An increased frequency of buses as well as service running longer hours.
- Improvements to bus stops: the installation of benches, shelters, lights, and up-to-date schedules.
- More Metrocard refill stations so they can fill up their cards at their convenience.
- Better communication and transparency between Bee-Line and its customers—including the public in service cut decisions and accessing Bee-Line customer service outside of the 9-4pm current customer service phone hours
- Better accessibility practices so the Bee-Line can serve **all** Westchester residents

Read ***The Buzz on the Bee-Line*** report here:

<https://tstc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/The-Buzz-on-the-Bee-Line.pdf>

“Over the past several months we have connected with many BeeLine riders, who depend on buses to get to their jobs as essential workers, to get to doctors appointments, to see loved ones, to shop for groceries. We’ve asked them to share their experiences with us in order to help the county address the issues most pressing for its transit riders,” said **Renae Reynolds, Executive Director of Tri-State Transportation Campaign**. The people who depend on Bee-Line are disproportionately low-income people of color, the majority of whom don’t have access to a vehicle, and many of these riders depend on Bee-Line to access jobs, schools, and simply survive in Westchester County. This is why it is so important to amplify their voices and experiences, especially as the County undergoes a countywide bus network redesign process”.

“There is a clear connection between access to affordable public transit and economic and educational opportunities. Yet, there are still many gaps in access to public transportation even here in Westchester County. That’s why, as part of last year’s New York State budget, we funded \$62.7 million in operating assistance toward Westchester’s Bee-Line. The Senate Majority will continue to make investments in our public transportation systems to help ensure equity to access in this county and across the state” said **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins**.

“Public transit, including our Bee-Line bus system, is a crucial lifeline for so many Westchester residents. It provides mobility that is affordable to people of all incomes; it offers mobility to those who are unable to drive; and it helps us limit carbon emissions,” said **Westchester County Legislator Mary Jane Shimsky**. “Maintaining and improving equitable access to public transit is crucial to business, education and social opportunity. I thank the Tri-State



Transportation Campaign for assembling these Bee-Line bus rider stories. This real-world information will help us in our continuing effort to provide safe, equitable and sustainable transit to the people of Westchester County.”

“Public transit is so vitally important to our communities. It opens up mobility options for so many residents -- those who can't afford a car, or are too young to drive as well as people with disabilities for whom driving is not an option,” said **Westchester County Legislator Terry Clements**. “It also improves our carbon footprint. That's why it is so important that we continue to work to make access to public transportation equitable, affordable and environmentally sustainable. I'm happy to join the Tri-State Transportation Campaign in marking Transit Equity Day, on the birthday of such an important trailblazer as the late Rosa Parks, and I'm looking forward to reading the stories the Campaign has collected from Bee-Line riders to help us as lawmakers guide our work on public transit in Westchester.”

"Many Yonkers residents depend on the Bee-Line Bus System to get to work, medical appointments, shopping and cultural and entertainment venues. Therefore, I applaud the Tri-State Transportation Campaign's ridership survey which is sharing real world Bee-Line rider experiences as Westchester County considers system improvements. Those improvements should take transit equity into careful consideration, because every community in our wonderfully diverse county deserves access to good quality transportation," said **Assemblymember Nader Sayegh, who represents the 90th district in the New York State Assembly**.

“Westchester County has nearly a million residents now, who shouldn’t be stuck with a transit network drawn for the needs of decades ago. The Bee-Line should be dramatically upgraded now, with more frequent and reliable service for the riders who use and need it the most,” said **David Bragdon, Executive Director of TransitCenter**

"Bus riders deserve better service. After two pandemic years in which buses have delivered essential workers to the frontlines every single day, it's time for public officials to put riders first on busy streets and on tight budgets. Transit equity demands investments in better service and a stronger transit workforce. The Riders Alliance is proud to stand with our allies at the Tri-State Transportation Campaign and support better buses for all New Yorkers" **said Jolyse Race, Senior Organizer at Riders Alliance**



“Connecting communities and commuters with affordable transit are critical components of equity and economic vibrancy,” **said Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC).** “People should be able to plan their days around their activities, not around whether they can get where they need to go by transit: access to transit is access to opportunity. Making sure that riders can afford to get where they’re going with innovative pilot fare discount programs like Freedom Ticket Phase 2, with transfers to New York City Transit and suburban buses, will ensure that people have access to the ride that is best for them. Around the region, essential workers depend on buses every day; an investment in bus service and transfers is an investment in equity. Bee-Line is a critical connector for Westchester riders, whether to New York City subways or Metro-North, and having a seamless system should be an immediate goal, not a long-lost dream.”

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Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a 501(c)(3) non-profit policy advocacy organization dedicated to mobility, accessibility, equity and livability in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut.