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Town Halls on Transportation Accessibility

May 9, 2023 · One-Page Summary

At Transit Planning 4 All's **Town Halls on Transportation Accessibility** on May 9, 2023, participants shared their experiences with inclusion and advocacy in transportation planning. Attendees were asked five questions around transit planning and inclusion and responded with examples from their personal or professional experience.

Participants explained that when they think about public transit, they think of **inaccessibility, unreliability, and lack** – lack of accessible options on nights or weekends, lack of fixed-route bus routes and paratransit options, lack of accessible bus stops, lack of training for drivers and riders with disabilities, and lack of funding.

When asked about inclusion, attendees responded that they think of the words **minimal, difficult, and essential**. Many participants explained that even if inclusion happens, it's **patronizing, not meaningful**. One transit agency explained that they work to include people with disabilities and older adults, but face a lack of resources to address issues that are brought up in these meetings, which leads to a **lack of trust**.

Attendees were asked about barriers to participating in transit planning for people with disabilities, older adults, and caregivers, as well as solutions to those barriers.

- **Barriers:** lack of transportation, not being informed about meetings, technology, location, timing, not being heard, apathy, disillusionment, and lack of education.
- **Solutions:** compensation, persistence, dependable transportation with options outside regular hours, hosting both in-person and virtual meetings with multiple time options, and advertising in places to reach people with disabilities and older adults.

Some participants gave **personal examples** of their **advocacy work**, like a transit consumer from Missouri who lobbied for a bus stop to get moved to an accessible location, and a blind individual from Hawaii who worked to change seatbelts on paratransit vans from lap belts to 3-point shoulder belts to make transit safer for blind consumers.