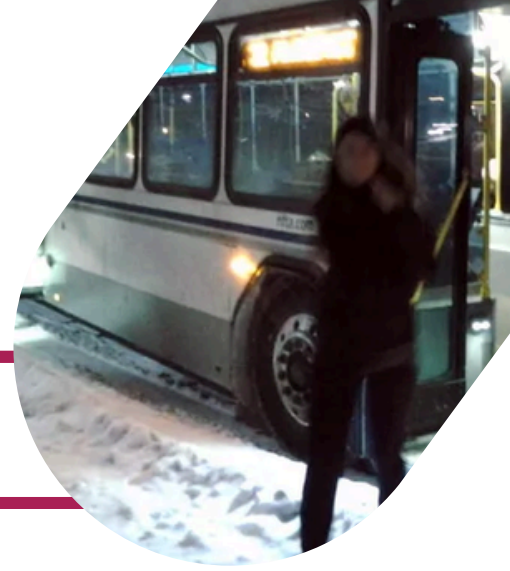




LAB Report

Buffalo, NY



Building Trust and Transparency
November-December 2022 MOVE Roundtable

with support from  LINCOLN INSTITUTE
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Where We Started

The horrific mass shooting on May 14 impacted Buffalo forever. They lost beloved community members and a collective sense of safety. The shooting also brought community and systemic inequities sharply into focus. In the aftermath, Buffalonians and individuals across the world stepped up to provide support and solutions to address what was lost as well as ongoing challenges. These actions built hope and opportunity for members of the community, particularly those most directly impacted. Millions of dollars were raised to support access to healthy food, education, healthcare, jobs, affordable housing and addressing both immediate needs and systemic changes. Continued advocacy is needed to ensure that systemic changes are made.

Opportunity

Initially, transit and transportation had not been an explicit focus of renewal and redefinition efforts. But the Biden administration's priority on transportation, the availability of federal funding and major transit projects in Buffalo offered an opportunity.

Approach

Mpact:LAB facilitated the Buffalo MOVE Roundtable, which convened a diverse group of leaders to explore: "What is the role of public transit in today's Buffalo Niagara? How could transit shape greater opportunities and build a better tomorrow for those in the Buffalo region?" It was hosted by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA).

Outcomes & Next Steps

Over the six weeks of the Roundtable, participants frequently mentioned the immense value they experienced from being part of the group. The conversation focused on the realities of Buffalo transit, related decision-making, and how to involve other Buffalonians who care deeply about their community/communities and its/their future. Participants tried to identify what changes are both needed and possible. Members remarked at how unusual and "what a treat" it was to be part of this kind of forum. While the initial framing of the Buffalo MOVE Roundtable centered transit, during the first meeting, participants voiced that transparency in decision-making is a major challenge in Buffalo. A main interest and benefit of this group is an ongoing communication pathway so Roundtable members can continue to connect to share ideas, actions, questions, and insights, such that decisionmakers and residents alike are better informed by one another. This communication pathway is one step toward shifting the status quo and power dynamic in Buffalo today.

What is the role of public transit in today's Buffalo Niagara? How could transit shape greater opportunities and build a better tomorrow for those in the Buffalo region?

– Buffalo MOVE Roundtable's framing question





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2024 Status Check

Since the Buffalo MOVE Roundtable, two major trust-building and increased transparency efforts have been underway. First is [the Equitable Development scorecard](#), which will be used by NFTA and the City of Buffalo when reviewing proposals for an equitable transit-oriented development at [LaSalle Station](#). The scorecard will also be used for future evaluations of similar measures. Second is trust-building and transparency efforts through Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), the region's metropolitan planning organization. Taking note of transparency conversations that occurred during the Roundtable, GBNRTC's Executive Director created and filled a Marketing & Outreach Coordinator position. The Marketing & Outreach Coordinator helps publicize actions the MPO plans to take. The Coordinator also reports on feedback from the community on their understanding of the MPO's processes and actions and on web site traffic, news articles, social media performance, and community presentations or meetings at monthly MPO decision-making meetings.

Interested in learning more? Contact Sarah Rudolf at sarahr@mpactmobility.org.



LAB Capacity-building and Stakeholder Development

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