



LINKing Up Seattle's Transit Game: Youth-Inspired Outreach Strategies From Transit Experts

Madelyn Eder*, [@EderMadelyn](#), Program of the Environment, University of Washington
Site Supervisor: Eugene Kramer, Seattle Subway
Faculty Advisor: Kirsten Foot, Communication, University of Washington
Host Organization: Seattle Subway Foundation



Context and Background

- Transportation has the highest CO2 emissions in Washington at 39% as of 2019
- Public transportation is an effective way to reduce climate related emissions
- Youth are often neglected within the research and practice of transit programs
- To bridge this gap, outreach strategies must be developed and implemented for youth specifically

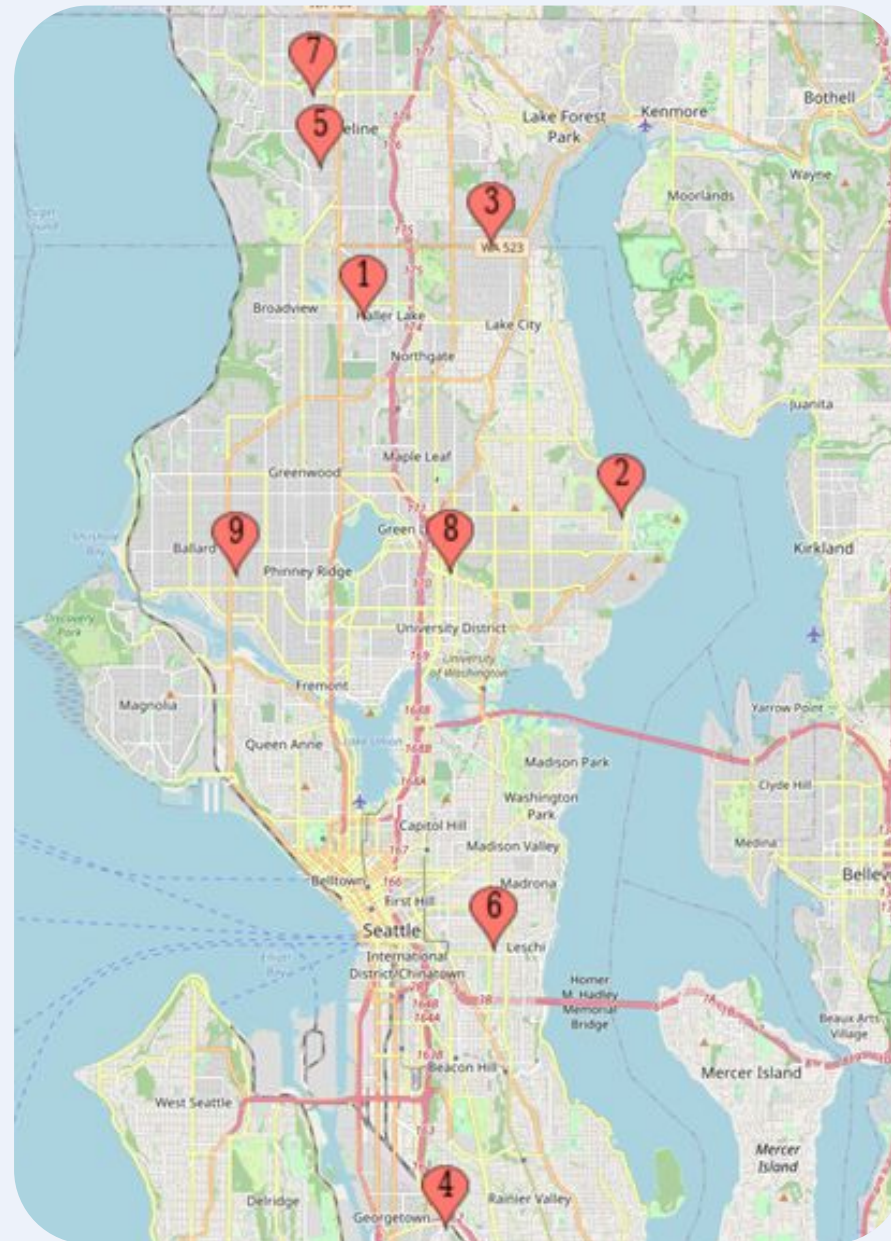
Internship and Methods

- Interned at the Seattle Subway Foundation, a nonprofit organization from January to March
 - Presented to high school classes, discussing the importance of public transportation by using the three types of appeals (Figure 1)
 - 9 schools were visited in total (Figure 2)
- Interviewed 6 experts in the field of transportation in 4 different transit focused organizations



Figure 1: Internship partner and I before giving a presentation to a Shorewood High School class

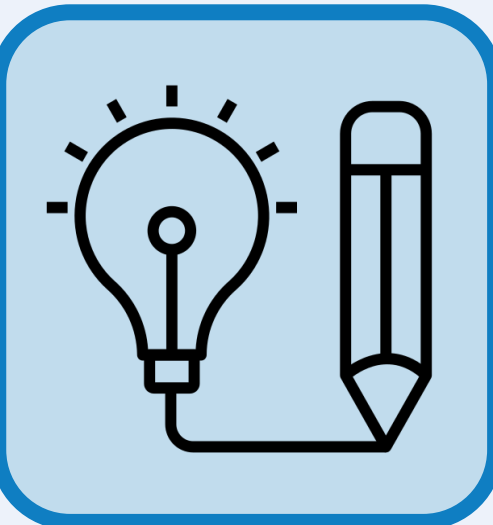
Figure 2: Map of Seattle showing all high schools visited during internship



Research Question

What outreach components are recommended by experts when informing youth about transit opportunities?

Result



Creative

- Go beyond exclusively traditional methods (Ex. contests, new safety measures, or photo exhibits)



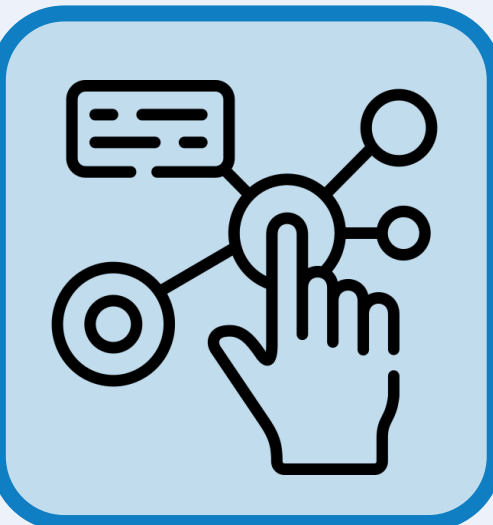
Holistic

- Create a balance between public, non profit and private organizations (Ex. strengths and weaknesses)
- Base effort on what the community needs (Ex. "meet them where they are at")



Accessible

- Level background knowledge among youth (Ex. creation of transit curriculum)
- No use of jargon unless necessary (Ex. avoid using big words or acronyms)



Interactive

- Include youth in transit decisions and allow opportunities for leadership (Ex. youth specific jobs)

Figure 3: Visual aid depicting the effective strategies gathered from human subject interviews of experts in the field

Significance

- Transit related beliefs and behaviors of youth are likely to influence their usage as adults
 - Starting outreach early is very important
- Youth are the future riders, voters, and planners
- Adopting these components will increase the effectiveness of transit focused outreach
 - Leading to lifelong riders and supporters

Next Steps

- Expanding transportation access is crucial for reducing CO2 emissions (Figure 4)
- Within the new free fare legislation youth should be prioritized to increase ridership



- Future research should explore and evaluate the efficacy of incorporating these components

Figure 4: Outreach conducted at the University District Farmers Market

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my fondest gratitude to Jordan Williams, Eugene Kramer, Kirsten Foot, Seattle Subway Volunteers, experts in the field, high school teachers and students, my POE classmates, my friends, and family.