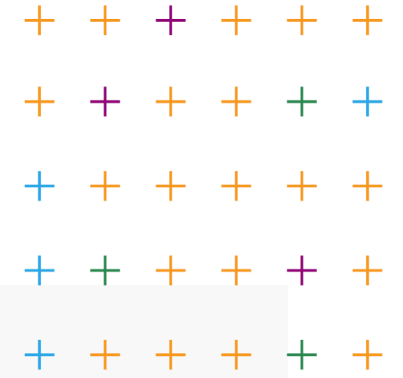


Transit Storytelling

Collecting and Amplifying Stories for Advocacy



Overview

- + Storytelling for advocacy
- + The storytelling journey
 - Defining and discovering stories
 - Collecting the right stories
 - Content creation and amplification
- + Storytelling resources

Leveraging stories to power advocacy

What elected officials need

Elected officials want to hear from constituents about how their actions and investments make life better in their states or districts.

What stories can offer

Stories from businesses and local leaders can convey the value of public transportation for businesses, communities, and local economies – and how continued investment is crucial to cities, districts, and states.

The storytelling journey

The storytelling journey



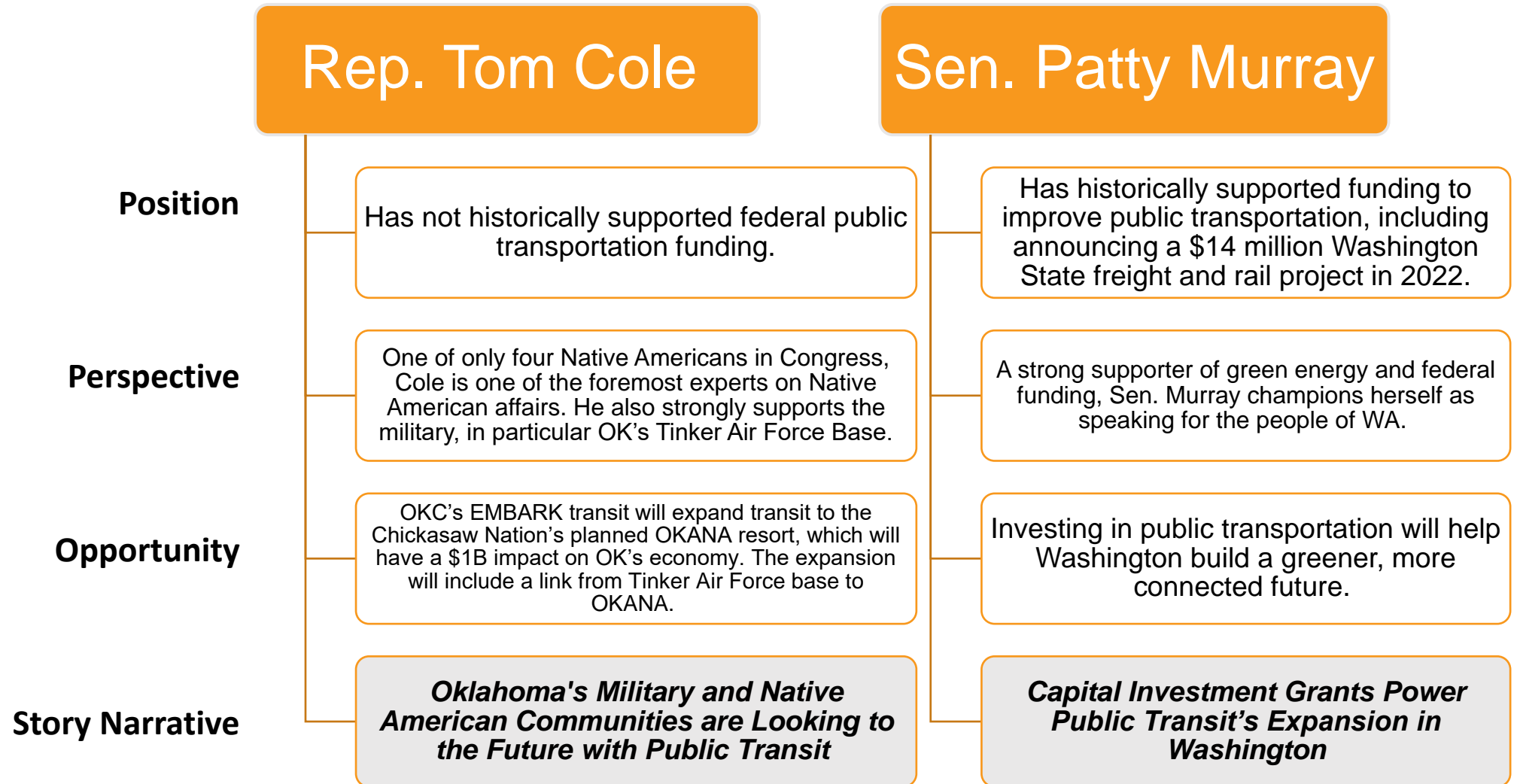
Know your audience: Identifying the right stories

Defining your audience allows you to choose the right story to tell to persuade your audience, vet and prep your storytellers, and get powerful content through audio or video interviews with storytellers.

+ Think about:

- **Policy Priorities:** What are the policy and personal priorities your target policymaker holds that intersect with public transportation?
- **Storyteller voice:** Who does your audience need to hear from to truly listen to our message?
- **Demographics:** Consider occupation, age, race and ethnicity, geography, life experiences, occupation.
- **Relationship with public transportation:** Consider range of perspectives e.g., businesses that benefit from being close to transit, businesses involved in manufacturing public transit, communities connected to services thanks to public transit
- **Impact:** How changes or cuts in public transportation funding would impact their occupation, the success of their business, community and economy.

Know your audience: Identifying narrative opportunities



Discovery: Finding new and existing stories/storytellers

- + Look for diverse perspectives on how public transit benefits local businesses, communities and economies.
- + Conduct outreach to:
 - Local businesses situated along transit lines
 - Developers opening housing or businesses close to local transit
 - Program managers at local transit systems
 - Major employers in your area (hospitals, colleges) whose employees and business benefit from public transportation
- + Monitor local and national news coverage for stories about public transportation at the state level
- + Use stories to get more stories (a person with a story knows someone with a story)

Discovery: Capturing different perspectives



Storyteller: Josiah Dietrich

Role: Electrician at New Flyer in St. Cloud, MN

Perspective: Sees firsthand how public transportation supports good-quality jobs



Storyteller: Alisa Luber

Role: Project Developer, Mercy Housing

Perspective: Knows how expanded public transit + Capital Investment Grants improve WA’s affordable housing communities



Storyteller: Cody Boyd

Role: Community Engagement Manager, EMBARK

Perspective: Working on EMBARK’s efforts to connect Tinker Air Force base with Chickasaw Nation’s planned OKANA resort

Story collection: Prepping for effective interviews

- + Catalog story leads in an internal spreadsheet or file
 - a story that is not relevant in this moment may become relevant in the future
- + Build an interview guide, but use it as just that: a guide.
 - Get familiar with content ahead of time; review the background you have on the person so you don't have to ask questions you already have the answers to.
 - You do not need to ask every question in your guide or ask them in the order outlined, if you feel it is insensitive, doesn't make sense, or already have the information.
- + Confirm permission for specific types of use (e.g., media outreach, video)
- + Share when and where their story may be used, whether they will be able to see it in advance, and what type of response they may receive.

Sample interview questions:

- What role does your job/organization play in the local public transportation landscape? Can you tell us a little about the work you are doing on a day to day basis?
- Are you aware of any federal investments that have been made towards your local transit system? If so, what are they and what systems have received the funding? If not, what do you think funding could do for the system in your location?
- We're aware of [this story] in your location, can you tell us a little about what you know about [this story]?

Story Collection: Conducting thoughtful interviews



Use your **shared experience** and interest in public transportation as a starting point to **build trust**, let them know you are working towards the same goals



Have your interview guide on hand, but remember, **this is a conversation!** Don't read verbatim.



Provide guidelines/examples if needed, but **empower people to tell their story.**



Help them **draw out powerful points** in their story by asking interviewees to expand on their ideas and experience.



Offer different communications options – interviews can be conducted via phone call or video.



Follow up to see if there are photos or video footage they're able to share to bring the story to life.

Content creation: Finding the right format

+ Not all stories work in all formats. Some stories may be best suited for social, blog and website content, while other stories may be better told through a podcast or video.

+ **Find the right format by considering:**

- **Voice:** Is the storyteller a known public figure who would be recognized on video?
- **Resources:** What visual and audio assets do you already have to tell this story?
- **Channels:** Does your organization and/or the storytellers organization (or storyteller) have a following on a certain social media channel that can be leveraged to expand the reach of this content.
- **Timing:** Stories work best when they are timely; likewise, storytellers and partners are most likely to engage when the subject is still fresh in their minds. Choose a format that you can launch sooner rather than later.

Video (example from MN)

- ✓ Voices + company willing to be on camera
- ✓ Storytellers are real constituents in districts of target policymakers
- ✓ Budget for on-location shoot
- ✓ APTA had identified opportunities where video could be played in front of target policymakers

Article (example from OK)

- ✓ Story was relevant to policymaker but there would be sensitivities with capturing storytellers on camera
- ✓ Key storytellers were organization spokespeople, not everyday workers
- ✓ Priority was to get story on landing page quickly

Content creation: Bringing the story to life

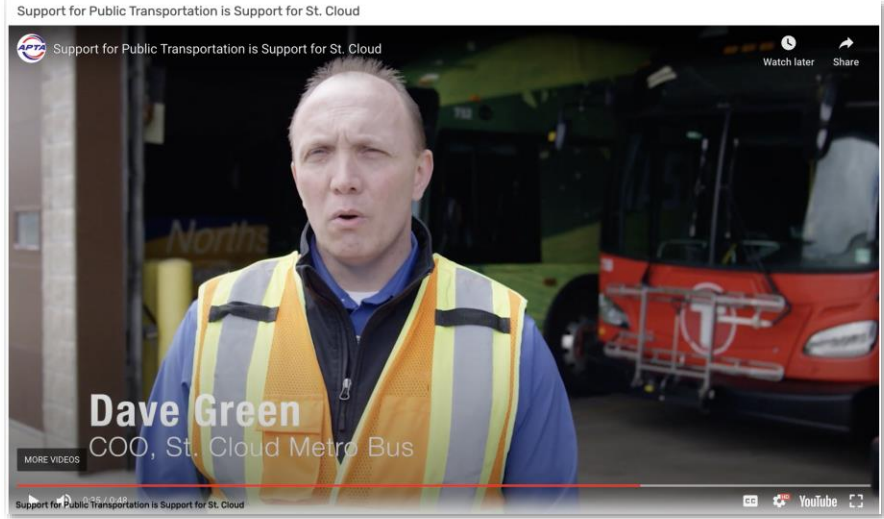
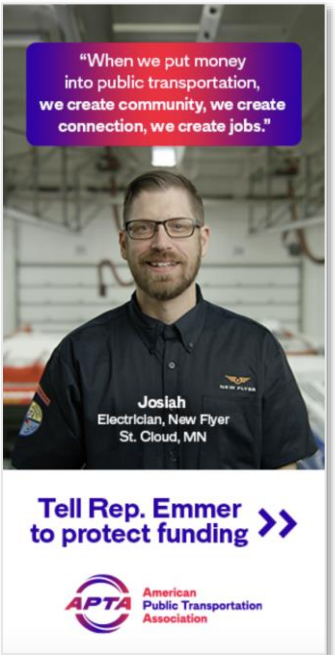
- + Once your story is crafted, review the final story to ensure it reflects the most powerful points from your conversations.
- + Ask yourselves if there are any other perspectives that would add to this story – can you reach out for a quote from a local official, transit leader, or other party?
- + Bring the story to life with content creation that can be used across channels and at events:
 - Social graphics
 - Banner ads
 - Quote cards
 - One-pagers
 - Homepage updates

St. Cloud's Bus Manufacturing Facility Creates Jobs, Supports the Community

June 7, 2023

In St. Cloud, Minnesota, public transportation doesn't just serve the people who ride it.

The New Flyer bus factory, located in the heart of St. Cloud, fuels businesses, individuals, and families across the United States. Founded in 1930, New Flyer is now the largest bus manufacturer in North America and a proud APTA member. Each day, there are over 30,000 New Flyer buses on American roads helping take people to work, doctor's appointments, local restaurants, shopping and errands, or school drop-offs.



Amplification: Leveraging your network

- + Just as important as collecting is making sure both the elected official and the people they listen to see it.



Engage partners to maximize impact

- Share toolkits ahead of the story's launch; be clear about when to post to have the biggest impact. Present the story and amplification opportunity at an event or meeting
- Tag partners, local officials, media and policymakers in social media posts surrounding the story's launch; Engage and share partner content
- Pitch the story to local or national media outlets

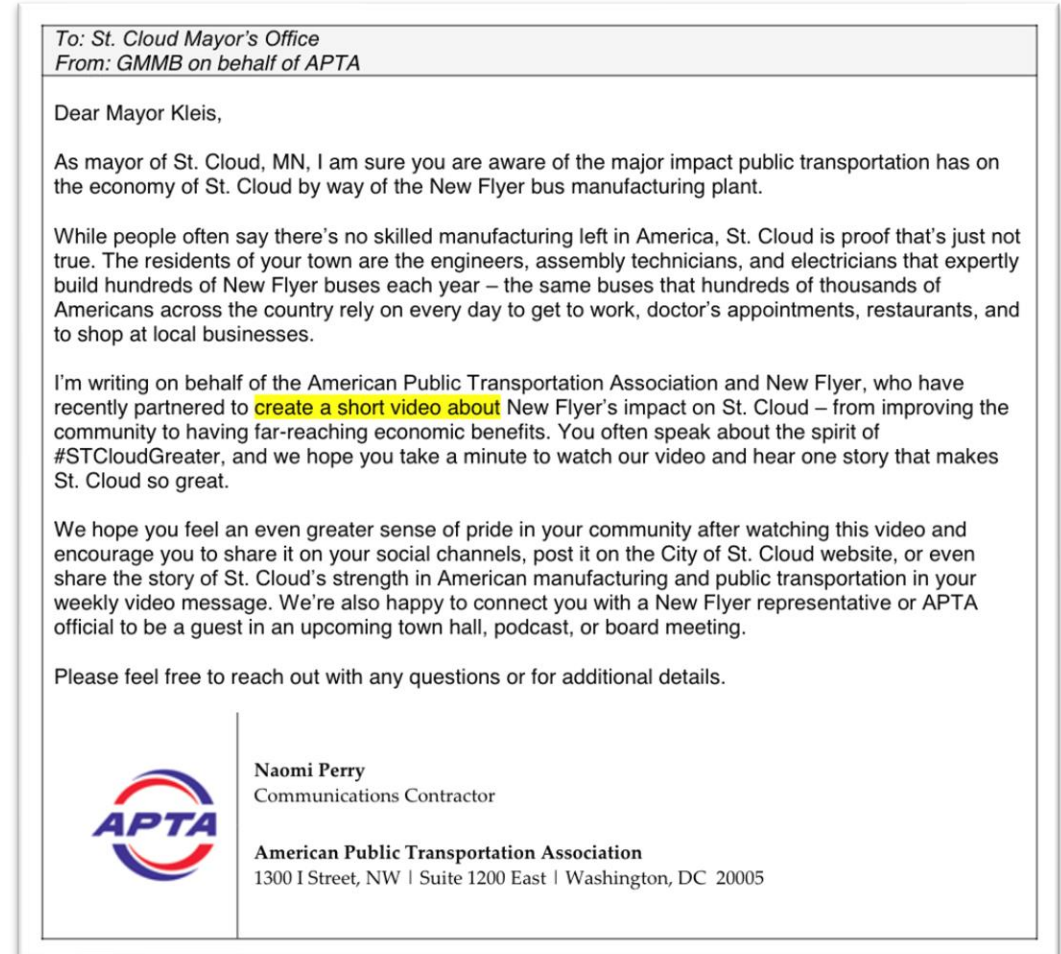


Guide storytellers in being an effective advocacy partner

- Ask if they are willing to share their story with media
- Invite storytellers to write a letter to elected officials
- Set up a town hall or similar event to tell their story
- Ensure storytellers are aware of future opportunities as they come up

Amplification: Share directly with elected officials

- + There are a number of ways you can make sure your story reaches elected officials, including tagging them on social, holding press events, and direct outreach.
- + Remember that outreach to elected officials needs to be memorable and concise. Here are some tips:
 - **Find the key point:** Review your story narrative and what you know about your elected official, what 1-2 bullet points will make them care most?
 - **Support with data:** Include localized data on the economic impact of public transportation in the policymaker's district/state
 - **Make the ask:** Let them know how they can keep public transportation strong by including a call to action. Is it voting in support of something? Is it negotiating for a different budget?



Thank you!

