

APTA Guidance for
**Planning Site Visits
and Events with Your
Members of Congress**



**American
Public Transportation
Association**

Introduction

In the upcoming months, Congress will make critical decisions on the future of public transportation investment. As dedicated members of APTA and passionate public transportation advocates, you have the opportunity to engage with Members of Congress (MOCs) and invite them to see firsthand the impact of public transportation in your communities. Whether it is showcasing the manufacturing jobs generated from your rail facility or highlighting the essential role of your bus system in facilitating daily commutes, organizing a site visit or event with MOCs serves as a crucial way to illustrate the significance of public transportation funding to the well-being of American communities and local economies.

The following information is designed to assist you in effectively planning, organizing, and executing an event with your elected officials, along with providing sample social media posts for maximum impact.



Initial Outreach

→ Identify who you would like to invite.

- You can identify your Senators at [U.S. Senate: States in the Senate](#)
- You can identify your Representatives at [Find Your Representative | house.gov](#)

→ Identify upcoming Congressional recess periods.

Members of Congress spend a considerable amount of time “at home” during what are known as “District Work Periods”. The August and October District Work Periods present opportune times for scheduling a site visit. You can access the schedule for the House at [2024 House Calendar](#) and for the Senate at [2024 Senate Calendar](#). MOC calendars fill up quickly, and requests should be submitted several weeks in advance.

→ Invite your MOC to visit.

APTA advises sending a letter invitation via email to the office’s scheduler (you can obtain the scheduler’s contact information from the Member’s website). [See APTA’s template invitation letter](#). Alternatively, some MOC websites will offer you an online form to complete to request a visit.

The letter should propose a specific date and time for the event, while also offering alternative options in case the suggested timing isn’t feasible for the MOC. Acknowledge the likelihood that their schedule may already be pre-planned, and express flexibility in accommodating their availability if applicable.

In your letter, clearly outline the duration of time you are requesting from the MOC, specifying their involvement (such as delivering remarks to workers or conducting a facility tour), and emphasize the significance of their participation. Highlight the number of employees or local workers impacted by your business or public transit system and articulate the potential benefits of their attendance. In addition, please copy the APTA Government



Affairs and Advocacy team in your email to signify your APTA membership and ensure the MOC is aware of our support.

→ Invite local elected officials.

We also recommend inviting local elected officials, whose schedules are often more flexible than MOC, to participate in the event. Please consult the MOC prior to extending invitations to the local elected officials for the MOC event.

→ Follow up with the MOC scheduler.

Several days following your initial email, it is advisable to reach out to the MOC’s scheduler to confirm receipt of the invitation and establish a dialogue. This outreach presents an opportunity to exchange contact information and solidify the event date.

- After the MOC has confirmed attendance, consider arranging a meeting or phone call with your staff involved in the visit to ensure clarity regarding the plan and any related advocacy messages.
- If necessary, schedule a walkthrough with key staff ahead of the site visit. Mapping out the route ensures smooth and punctual execution of the event.
- Make sure to provide and receive a day-of contact, to ensure the event runs smoothly and both you and the MOC can remain informed of any last-minute changes.

Plan the Event



→ Select a site plan.

• For Public Transportation Operators

- Extend an invitation to your MOC to join you on a bus or train ride. Select a route with high ridership or one that serves populations reliant on such services, such as elderly, disabled, or disadvantaged communities. Alternatively, select a route that serves popular businesses or critical services, like sports facilities or airports.

- Offer the legislator or their staff the opportunity to observe the inner workings and latest innovation of your bus or rail maintenance facility.
- Provide a tour of your operations center to the legislator or their staff, highlighting the additional jobs created through operations and service planning.

• For Business Members

- Invite your MOC to tour a manufacturing facility and showcase your public transportation products.
- Even office facilities offer valuable opportunities for MOCs to engage with employees and constituents. Ensure a visual presentation highlights the public transportation projects that your team is undertaking.
- Demonstrate your company's nationwide reach by showcasing multiple projects across various states and regions, illustrating how your efforts secure contracts and contribute to the economic vitality of your Congressional District.



Plan the Event (continued)

→ Create an event program fact sheet.

It is important that all participants, stakeholders, and Congressional staff are well informed of the visit and expectations. The more prepared everyone is, the more productive the visit will be. The program fact sheet should include relevant information, including what you plan to show the MOC and/or staff person, a timeline of events, a list of participants, the issues to be discussed (talking points), and logistical information about the venue, appropriate clothing to wear, directions to the location, and a contingency plan in case of bad weather if applicable.

→ **Assemble take-away materials.** Offer a brochure, pamphlet, or prepare a one-page document that shares your organization's story. Ensure it encompasses fundamental facts, such as Federal Transit Program funding needs, and elements of the program within which your business operates. Highlight your organization's role in job creation, advancing equity, addressing climate change, and meeting evolving mobility needs within the community, prioritizing the issues top-of-mind for your MOC. In addition, share how you are currently using Federal funding, emphasizing the immediate and long-term impacts of ongoing capital projects, together with the diverse economic benefits they bring.



3 Pre-Event Amplification



→ **Coordinate with the MOC's Director of Communications.** The decision to involve the press ultimately rests with the MOC. However, it is recommended to propose and draft a press release following the event if the Director of Communications opts against extensive coverage. If the MOC approves media coverage, it's advisable to send out a press release at least one week before the event, followed by contacting key local press outlets via phone calls.

→ **Social media amplification.** After you have finalized the event details and amplification strategy with your MOC, we encourage you to publicize the event across your social media platforms and start engaging with stakeholders. Remember to tag your MOC and APTA (refer to the account handles provided below) to enhance engagement and broaden your audience reach.

→ **Engage media.**

- Having media coverage at your event will help elevate your message and provide valuable publicity for your MOC. For example, check out Senator Susan Collins' [visit to the new Bangor Transit Center](#) or Senator Patty Murray's and Senator Maria Cantwell's [tour of Washington state's](#)

[ferry fleet](#) with Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg.

- Prior to the event, collaborate closely with APTA's Communications team and your MOC to distribute media advisories to local press, with a particular emphasis on local TV outlets. These advisories should spotlight the event and its significance to the community.

→ **Identify and brief spokespeople.**

- In addition to having the MOC available for a media interview, select a few additional spokespeople from your business or system (e.g., employees, riders, local businesses leaders who benefit from transit) who can effectively convey the importance of public transportation to the local community and establish the connection between Federal funding and the resulting impact the system or business has on the community. Worker stories are particularly powerful, in terms of demonstrating the economic benefit of public transportation investments.
- Take time to brief your spokespeople so they feel comfortable telling their stories and answering questions—both when speaking to MOCs and to the media.

Day of Event

The event itself will vary depending on your goals, but we recommend a basic format of a tour followed by speeches/media availability so reporters can get visuals and interviews. **Be respectful of MOC's tight schedule and other commitments.** Do not allow the site visit to run longer than the amount of time scheduled for the visit.

→ **Greet the MOC and his/her staff (3-5 min.).** The business or public transit agency CEO should be on hand to greet the MOC and his/her staff when they arrive on site.

→ **Tour your facility (15-30 mins.).** Have your CEO lead the tour and consider including relevant personnel who can address any inquiries. Ensure a swift introduction of the MOC to your staff, being mindful of time constraints. The MOC will appreciate the opportunity to greet potential voters.

→ **Media Press Conference (10-15 mins.).** To sustain engagement with your MOC, prepare 2-3 questions for face-to face discussions. Enhance your personal narratives with local data and firsthand accounts highlighting public transportation's community impact. Utilize data and talking points available at [apta.com/TransitImpact](https://www.apta.com/TransitImpact) to help shape your questions. These may include:

- *Here in [name of region], public transportation generates nearly [XX number] jobs for everyday Americans – helping strength our economy and community. Can we count on your commitment to support and protect public transportation funding for the residents of [name of region]?*
- *Each day, our [business/facility/system] depends on public transportation to connect us with customers and*

employees, with our economic influence extending throughout the state. How are you working with your colleagues across the aisle to ensure that funding for public transportation is protected so our community can continue to thrive?



Reminder: capture photos and videos.

You should assemble a team to capture photos, videos, quotes, and other promotional content to amplify on social media during the event. It is also a great opportunity to take more general photos of your system, business, leadership, and workers, which you can use down the road and share with APTA for national advocacy outreach. Designate a person to record close-up videos of you or a colleague asking the MOC about their support for funding for public transportation, and their response. You can also share high-quality photos with local media who were unable to attend in person.

Post-Event Wrap Up

→ Send the MOC a thank you letter.

Email the thank you letter addressed to the MOC to the staff who facilitated the visit. In the cover email, express gratitude to the staff and attach the thank you letter.

→ **Follow up.** If the MOC makes any further request, ensure prompt follow up by contacting their office with the necessary information. Maintain engagement with your MOC through continued outreach, such as sending letters and attending town halls, to advocate for the protection of public transportation investment in forthcoming legislation.

→ Social media.

- To maximize the reach and longevity of your event, we encourage you to post content summarizing the event and highlighting your message across various platforms, including social media. Additionally, consider creating marketing materials such as a blogpost on your website or email to your partners and stakeholders. Amplify any photos, quotes, and videos captured during the event.
- Let APTA's Government Affairs and Advocacy team know how the event went and share photos, videos, news stories, or post links with APTA's Communications team so that they can share your content and amplify the event over national channels. You can also tag APTA in your posts.
- For media outlets that were unable to attend, collaborate with your MOC to share a post-event press release containing photos and quotes. This outreach increases your chances of securing coverage.

Sample Social Media Posts and Tweets



Pre-Event

Next week, we're thrilled to host @MOCTAG to tour our [system/facility/business] and see firsthand the impact of public transportation investments in our community. This is why #investment matters.

During Event

@MOCTAG's message here at XX is clear: investments in public transportation are creating jobs and building stronger communities. Our [system/facility/business] is just the latest example.

Share pictures and/or videos of the event

Post-Event

Thank you to @MOCTAG for stopping by our [system/facility/business] and discussing how public transit investment here in [region] will help strengthen our economy and future. #Investmentmatters

Share pictures and/or videos of the event



APTA Accounts

As you amplify your messages, tag your MOC's and APTA's social media accounts as appropriate, and email stories@apta.com so we can help share your story more broadly.

APTA's social media handles are:

-  **Instagram:** [@APTA_Transit](https://www.instagram.com/APTA_Transit)
-  **X (formerly Twitter):** [@APTA_info](https://twitter.com/APTA_info)
-  **LinkedIn:** [American Public Transportation Association](https://www.linkedin.com/company/AmericanPublicTransportationAssociation)
-  **Facebook:** [@AmericanPublicTransportationAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/AmericanPublicTransportationAssociation)

APTA Resources

For sample take-away materials as well as the latest messaging and Fact Book, visit:

- **Advocacy Campaign Landing Page:** apta.com/TransitImpact
- [Advocacy Resource Center](#)
- [Advocacy Message Guide](#)
- [Public Transit Fact Book](#)

Invitation for your Member of Congress to Visit Business Member

Dear Senator/Representative _____,

As the [CEO/President/VP] of [company], a company that employs [XXXX] people in your [District/State], I know how important public transportation services are to your constituents. My company works to [function of company and relationship to public transportation].

I'd like to invite you to come to [location] to see our work in action.

The public transportation industry plays an indispensable role in the community and is an investment in our national economy. Every \$1 billion invested in public transportation creates or sustains nearly 50,000 jobs across the entire economy. Every \$1 invested in public transportation generates \$5 in long-term economic return. In addition, public transportation enables our communities to provide access to opportunities, create family-wage jobs, advance equity, tackle climate change, and meet growing and evolving mobility demands.

With the historic investments of the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), I would like to show you the positive impact we have on our community and the innovation that can be achieved by fully funding the IIJA.

It would be an honor to have you [take a tour/join us on a panel/join our event/meet with our leadership] on [date]. Please contact [staff contact information] if you are interested. We look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks,
[name]

Invitation for your Member of Congress to Visit Transit Agency: For CEO, GM, Legislative Staff and or Transit Board Member

Dear Senator/Representative _____,

As the [Title within organization], I know how important the public transportation services we provide are for members of our community. Every day, XX users rely on our services to get to work, visit the doctor, attend school, and run errands.

I'd like to invite you to come to [location] to see our work in action.

The public transportation industry plays an indispensable role in the community and is an investment in our national economy. Every \$1 billion invested in public transportation creates or sustains nearly 50,000 jobs across the entire economy. Every \$1 invested in public transportation generates \$5 in long-term economic return. In addition, public transportation enables our communities to provide access to opportunities, create family-wage jobs, advance equity, tackle climate change, and meet growing and evolving mobility demands.

With the historic investments of the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), I would like to show you the positive impact we have on our community and the innovation that can be achieved by fully funding the IIJA.

It would be an honor to have you [take a tour/join us on a panel/join our event/meet with our leadership] on [date]? Please contact [staff contact information] if you are interested. We look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks,
[name]

Sample Agenda

- 10:00 AM** Greet the Member of Congress and any staff at the front of the building or in the reception area.
 - 10:10 AM** Tour of manufacturing facility/ transit system.
 - 10:45 AM** Meet in a conference room to offer the Member of Congress an opportunity to make remarks and for key executives and/or employees to share their experiences and concerns as well as industry priorities.
 - 11:15 AM** Staff meet and greet with Member of Congress.
 - 11:25 AM** Wrap up and get final questions and comments from the Member of Congress.
 - 11:30 AM** Conclude the event.
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Site Visit Checklist

- Reach out to APTA Government Affair and Advocacy (GAA) and let them know of your willingness to host a Congressional Site Visit and get their help and support.
- Identify who to invite. Include relevant staff.
- Identify possible dates by looking at the Congressional recess calendars.
- Draft your agenda and identify key attendees from your company.
- Draft and finalize your invite. Reach out to APTA GAA if you have any questions.
- Email your invitation to the Congressional office. If you need help finding this contact information, reach out to APTA GAA.
- Follow up with the Scheduler by phone if you do not hear back in 3-5 business days.
- Coordinate with APTA GAA on key industry messaging.
- Prep internal staff who will be leading the tour, attending meetings, speaking to media, capturing photos and videos, or otherwise facilitating the visit with the MOC.
- Send a thank you note to the MOC and any staff who attended or coordinated the visit.
- Follow up with the office by providing any additional information or resources that came up during the visit.
- Follow up with APTA GAA and let them know how the visit went, and how they can help coordinate follow up in Washington, DC.



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