HOP ON BOARD
SAN DIEGO

A SOCIAL IMPACT CAMPAIGN
06.08.23

Daniel Campos    Michelle Davalos    Ismael Ramos    Genelen Roldan
Our Theory of Change

Change starts with the individual, then with many, comes the collective. The collective can make on-the-ground changes that are necessary in improving public transit. The collective then, can inspire the structures and institutions responsible to carry out and implement necessary changes.

We are Hop on Board San Diego, a group passionate about improving San Diego’s public transit system through advocating, educating, and inspiring younger generations. We believe that accessible, efficient, and affordable public transportation is a human right, and critical to the sustainable development of San Diego. We’ve all experienced the difficulties of getting around in this car-centric city, and the frustrations are only growing as the population continues to grow and as public transportation becomes more unreliable.

Thankfully, we aren’t the only ones who see this as an issue. Government organizations like SANDAG are at work to make public transit accessible, efficient, and affordable in the near future. They’ve introduced the 2021 Regional Plan which details San Diego’s public transportation transformation. From light-rail extensions, to complete corridors, and mobility hubs. These are wonderful things that make us excited about the future.

However, we believe that it’s our responsibility to keep county and city decision makers accountable to the promises and plans they make. If we want our public transportation system to change for the better, it starts with the individual. An informed and passionate individual will inspire and communicate their desires for change to those around them, we call this the collective.

A collective group of individuals can make larger strides for change when they subscribe to a uniform thought process and share the same values. The collective’s voice and votes can influence the institutions responsible for carrying out these promised changes. Keeping our generation informed about the importance of keeping the government accountable is the most realistic way change will occur.

Most people won’t be politicians or work for the government, but most of us have the ability to voice our opinions at the polls and online. That’s why we maintain a high social media presence, it’s highly accessible to the younger generations and one of the easiest ways to communicate to the masses. We share information intentionally and desire that our posts are relatable and easy to understand. Our social media presence also allows us to communicate with other social issue campaigns focused on public transportation here in San Diego and government institutions and leaders.

All together Hop Board San Diego desires that young people care about the sustainable development of public transportation in San Diego. There’s lots of work to be done, so we are excited to see it through.
Objective 1: Event
Race to the Trolley & Tabling Event

For our event, Hop on Board San Diego leaders organized a run on the UCSD campus that emphasized the importance of accessible public transportation. According to the 2021 Regional Plan, currently 12% of low-income residents currently live within a half mile of a commuter rail, light rail, or Rapid transit stop. This statistic is especially alarming considering the largest employment centers in the county (Downtown, Kearny Mesa and Sorrento Valley) remain largely inaccessible by those who need it most.

This event on June 2, 2023 started at RIMAC and ended at the UCSD Central Campus Station. The half-mile run is representative of what it was like for most people to deal with on a daily basis just to make a living. Just as our campaign targeted people in our generation, the run was specifically targeted to UCSD students, but was available to anyone who was interested. We shared our plans on social media two weeks prior to the event to build excitement and posted reminders on a regular basis. Even though we didn’t get as many people as we desired to participate in this part of our event (original goal was 50), the group that came out was excited to run and to learn about public transportation issues in San Diego.

In addition to the race to the trolley, our event included tabling for our campaign at the UCSD trolley stop. During this portion of our event, we handed out our informational pamphlet to people who were interested in learning more about our campaign. Snacks were offered to those who stopped by our event table.

This portion of our event allowed us to connect with many individuals of all backgrounds and get them informed about public transportation in San Diego. As this was a generally high traffic area and other events were taking place on campus, we were able to have meaningful conversations with not just UCSD students, but also with students from different schools across the state and country, as well as people who were not students and happened to just be passing by. This event allowed us to reach even more people and get us closer to our goal.

Additionally, the organization Ride SD, which has a similar mission to our campaign, joined us for our event and spoke with passerbys as well.

- 5 people participated in race
- approx. 20-30 people reached from tabling
- reached people of various backgrounds and various opinions
Objective 2: Educational Resource
Tri-fold Pamphlet Brochure

We constructed 50 pamphlets to be handed out during our campaign event on June 2, 2023. It included an introduction to our campaign with our mission statement, alongside the promotion of other like-minded organizations/groups. In addition, we included details from the SANDAG Regional Plan to improve public transportation and statistics relevant to the public transit system.

During our event, racers for the race portion of our event were given this pamphlet to read and keep with them as their “ticket” to the trolley.

After our race, we continued to hand out our pamphlets to those who stopped by our event table. We handed out approximately 25-30 pamphlets.

We believe this helped educate and inspire the youth of UCSD to gain insight of the complex problem and solutions of transportation in San Diego.
Objective 3: Social Media
Instagram and TikTok

For our social media, we utilized TikTok and Instagram. Our Instagram was one of great successes in our campaign. Our initial goal was 50 followers. We ultimately accumulated 102 followers and 515 total likes on our posts. We had SANDAG view and like our story on more than one occasion, alongside other organizations like RideSD, Environmental Health Coalition, and Circulate SD. Most notably, the San Diego mayor government account started following us early on in our campaign efforts. Our posts included information about SANDAG and relevant statistics about accessibility and efficiency of public transportation.

Because our primary target audience was the youth, we also included posts related to public transportation that were humorous and fun, rather than purely informational, to draw attention to our campaign and our goals. We believe this curated a following in the start of our campaign to grab the attention of the youth. We focused less on our TikTok since our Instagram was more successful and we were able to communicate our message more effectively, alongside getting in contact with other like-minded organizations. We still did decently and had 176 likes and 1341 views on our one tik tok post. Overall, we believe we exceeded our expectations in the social media realm and constructed a platform where we can perform our mission effectively.
Objective 4: Creative Option
Change.org Petition

For our campaign’s creative option, we chose to create a petition on the website Change.org which called for efficient and accessible public transportation in San Diego. As our campaign focused primarily on the individual and shifting people’s attention to the importance of public transportation, we believed a petition would be a good place to start bridging together the individual/collective and the policymakers who ultimately make important decisions for our city.

During our event, people who stopped by our table to share their feelings about public transportation also had the opportunity to sign this petition. As mentioned previously, snacks were offered to those who stopped by our event table, including those who signed our petition, and it is through this event that we got the most of our signatures. We reached 20 signatures (11 shares, 59 views, 1 comment) at the end of our event; however, this did fall short of the initial goal of 50 signatures.
Lessons Learned

1. Have a real life presence as much as a social media presence.
2. Improve outreach methods.
3. Plan early and collaborate with many groups as possible.
4. Have fun with it!

Overall, these past ten weeks have been a learning experience for all of us. We have learned to effectively communicate as a team and work together to reach a common goal of educating and advocating for better public transit here in San Diego. These are skills that will apply to our future endeavors, whether that’s in academia or in the professional world. Most importantly it’s made us better citizens, as we’ve learned about issues that are important to San Diego and how to address them not only now, but in the future. In regards to San Diego’s public transit system, it’s on its way to improving, but we need public policy makers to continue working to make sure their plans come to fruition.

Our campaign taught us that our social issue is something that people need to hear about continuously, because it’s easy to ignore and forget. By continuing to stay in the loop about what San Diego is doing to reform our public transit system, we are being responsible citizens. And responsible citizens vote and speak out against issues that we see. We will continue to inform friends and family about the importance of public transit and maintain a positive attitude as change will inevitably happen.

Call to Action

1. We must inspire individuals to take progress into their own hands. Never stop learning and advocating in creative ways.
2. Challenge previous held notions on what modern transportation means in society as a whole.