



# **STORIES >>>>** **THAT MOVE** **PEOPLE**

**Building Transit's Case in the Community**

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**Bus**

**Paratransit**

**Commuter**

# ABOUT BRITE

- **Regional public transit system serving Staunton, Waynesboro & Augusta County**
- **Fixed-route, commuter bus & ADA paratransit services**
- **Connects riders to work, healthcare, education & essential services**
- **Funded through federal and state grants matched by regional partners**
- **Focused on mobility, accessibility & quality of life across the Shenandoah Valley**



# INTRODUCTION



- **Rising operational costs & limited local funding**
- **Traditional transit metrics were not enough**
- **Needed a new way to communicate transit's value**
- **Developed a research-backed, story-centered campaign**



# **A CAMPAIGN CENTERED ON STORIES**



**How do you promote the value of transit to the public and a diverse group of community and funding partners?**

# THREE PILLARS



## Informational

- Data-driven
- Infographics
- Public education materials

## Relevant

- Strategic Plan analysis
- Stakeholder mapping
- Mission and Values Alignment

## Compelling

- Emotional connection
- Impactful community testimonials
- Multi-media storytelling

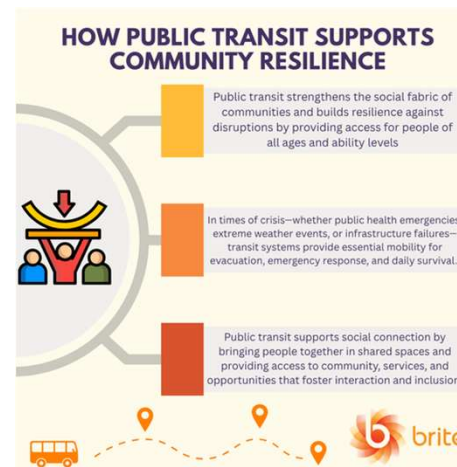
# INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

## Break Down Stereotypes:

- “More Than a Bus” campaign
- Challenging transit stereotypes
- Public transit as community infrastructure

## Multimedia Engagement:

- Social Pinpoint platform
- Value of Transit Toolkit
- Cross-platform communication strategy



### Local Economic Prosperity

BRITE Transit serves as a mechanism to bring tourists, workers, and visitors into our localities and transports them around the region in order to spur the local economy. Public transit improves community connections by linking different parts of the valley, and encouraging business growth and investment in the area. Transit also creates local jobs from drivers of the buses, to planners of the routes, and the mechanics that maintain the buses.



### Community Resilience

BRITE encourages riders to explore other areas of their communities and get to know their neighbors. Public transit allows our communities to remain stable and connected. Resilient communities have multiple, interconnected systems that can adapt and continue functioning when stressed, whether economically, environmentally, or socially, and public transit is one of the most important of these systems. Public transit facilitates social interactions and connections, fostering a sense of belonging and community cohesion, which are vital for resilience.



### Access To Jobs

Public Transit allows people to get to and from their jobs in a more convenient, less expensive way, all while avoiding the stress of traffic. BRITE's Afton Express connects the Valley to Charlottesville, where over 20,000 workers are employed by the University of Virginia. We are also able to bring talented workforce into the valley through our transit connections. When people can easily access employment opportunities, businesses can attract a wider pool of workers, which enhances productivity and fosters economic innovation.



### Access To Healthcare and More

Public transit provides transportation options for individuals without reliable access to personal vehicles, including low-income individuals, seniors, and people with disabilities. This allows them to access healthcare and other essential services. Public transit allows the aging population to maintain their independence, attend medical appointments, run errands, and participate in social activities, ultimately enhancing their quality of life and well-being. Our paratransit services help community members with mobility challenges to get where they need, and want to go!



### Local Infrastructure

Providing essential transportation, reducing congestion, and contributing to economic development are benefits of public transit that can increase property value and business sales. Public transit facilitates local development, as customers have easy access to local establishments. Public transit infrastructure can contribute to the overall structure of a community, increasing connectivity and access to various locations and services all throughout the Valley.



# »»» RELEVANCE



## Stakeholder Mapping

- Identified key community partners
- Analyzed missions, goals & strategic plans
- Mapped BRITE services to stakeholder priorities

## Value Alignment

- Connected transit to community outcomes
- Framed transit through stakeholder needs
- Demonstrated shared benefit & impact
- Pre-budget outreach & relationship building

**Instead of asking stakeholders to value transit because it supports OUR goals, we demonstrated how transit supports THEIR goals**



# »»» STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

## **Augusta Health**

**Mission:** “To strengthen the health and well-being of all people in our communities”

## **Wilson Workforce Rehabilitation Center**

**Mission:** “To provide people with disabilities with comprehensive, individualized services to help them realize personal independence through employment”

## **Augusta County**

**Mission:** “...to provide essential services to citizens to address their individual and collective well-being.”

## **City of Staunton**

**Comprehensive Plan Strategic Goals:** “An economically vibrant community; a resilient and sustainable community, a healthy community; and an informed and engaged community.”

# »»»» **COMPELLING**

## **Human-Centered Storytelling**

- Real rider & community partner voices
- Documentary-style video interviews
- Emotional connection through lived experience

## **Evidence-Based Communication**


- Stories and data working together
- Research-backed engagement strategy
- Making complex systems relatable





# **THE VALUE OF TRANSIT VIDEO**

## **Collaborative Video Development**

- **Partnership with local videographers**
  - **Authentic, community-driven interviews**
  - **Trust-based storytelling approach**
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# **FINAL THOUGHTS**

- **Storytelling and relationship-building are critical investments in transit's future**
- **Transit agencies should communicate their value continuously, not just during crises**
- **This campaign strengthened both community support and internal organizational purpose**
- **Investing in outreach today builds long-term sustainability for tomorrow**



**QUESTIONS?**

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