



# Advocacy **Advance**

a partnership of

**Alliance**  
for  
Biking & Walking

**THE LEAGUE**  
OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS

## Success at the Ballot Box: Winning Bicycle-Pedestrian Ballot Measures



This report highlights winning ballot measure campaigns across the country. Use this guide to learn how to build a successful bike/ped ballot measure campaign in your community.



## Introduction

As the federal funding landscape changes, more states, regions and cities are looking for local sources of critical transportation dollars. As a result, there has been a recent surge of transportation ballot measures across the United States.

**With a 79 percent victory rate in 2012, voters are telling their governments that transportation matters – and they’re willing to pay for it.**



For some communities, pairing transit with pedestrian and bicycle projects or roadways is the best way to achieve success at the ballot box. Other communities are required to go with a multi-modal measure by a governmental body. Either way, the rising trend in the United States shows that successful ballot measures include bicycle and pedestrian projects -- and there is a great potential to build partnerships between transit and active transportation advocates at the local and state level.

Earlier this year at the Center for Transportation Excellence Transit Initiatives and Communities Conference, Advocacy Advance gave scholarships to 9 advocates working on ballot measures in their community. Advocacy Advance continues to support some of these campaigns through its Rapid Response Grants,<sup>1</sup> including Alameda County, Atlanta, Boulder, Greenville, St. Louis and Tucson.

*“It was brilliant to bring bike/ped advocates into the transit conversation. I learned so much, met some great local contacts, and am eager to share the experience with our bus and streetcar teams in Tucson.”*

– Kylie Walzak, Living Streets Alliance

In this report, we take a look at some examples of how bicycle and pedestrian advocates across the country are getting involved or leading ballot measure campaigns to improve transportation choices and investment.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.advocacyadvance.org/grants#rapid>

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## Overview

A ballot measure is a piece of legislation that is voted on directly by citizens, rather than passed by an elected legislature. Many U.S. states and cities have funded transportation projects through local taxes and bonds approved by eligible voters. Ballot measures are legal in 24 states<sup>2</sup>.

There are two primary types of ballot measures<sup>3</sup>:

**Ballot Initiatives:** Citizens vote on a proposed law by gathering a pre-determined amount of signatures from registered voters.

**Referendums:** Citizens vote on a law that has already been passed by the legislature by gathering pre-determined amount of signatures from registered voters.

A description and success rate of the primary measures passed to finance transportation projects from 2000-2012 are pulled from the State Smart Transportation Initiative 2013 Transportation Revenue Sources report as follows<sup>4</sup>:

### Sales tax

#### 42% of successful transportation finance measures, 2000-2012

Thirty-three states have authorized local option sales taxes for use in transportation funding. The tax's broad base allows for significant revenue to be generated at a very low marginal rate. In a metropolitan county, a sales tax rate of one percent could generate \$50 to \$75 per person, an amount sufficient to fund transportation infrastructure investment. Using sales tax as a transportation funding mechanism can produce large amounts of revenue. California estimated that, of the \$9.4 billion in local transportation revenue generated in 2005–06, about one-third came from the local option sales tax. However, because they are tied to economic cycles, the revenue can fluctuate from year to year.



<sup>2</sup> <http://www.citizensincharge.org/states>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.citizensincharge.org/learn/primer>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ssti.us/2012/10/ssti-report-on-state-and-local-transportation-revenue-sources-ssti-2012/>

## Property tax

### 39% of successful transportation finance measures, 2000-2012

Property tax is the most basic source of funding for public expenditures at the local level. The revenues from the local property tax go into a municipality's general fund, which is used to finance basic public services. Some of the revenue can be used to fund transportation investment, but few states allow a certain percentage of the property tax to be designated for transportation purposes. Almost every municipality uses some portion of the property tax revenue in its general fund to pay for transportation projects.

## Bond measures

### 11% of successful transportation finance measures, 2000-2012

Citizens vote on measures for a state or municipality to sell bonds for the purpose of acquiring funds for various public works projects, including transportation infrastructure. Bonds themselves do not in themselves constitute a revenue stream, but are a form of debt. Investors purchase bonds based on the obligation of the issuer to repay the investor with interest. A project paid for with a bond issue will need to be secured by an identified revenue stream (such as tolls, transit fares, or parking fees) that is expected to be adequate to pay the debt service on the bonds.

## Vehicle fees

### 3% of successful transportation finance measures, 2000-2012

Every state collects vehicle registration fees from drivers. These fees are usually paid on an annual or biannual basis, depending on the state. In some states, local or county governments can also levy their own fees to help fund their transportation systems.

In 2010, voters in San Francisco supported Prop AA, which raises the annual vehicle registration fee \$10. Half of the \$5 million per year revenue was slated to fund pedestrian, transit and bicycle improvements<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://sf.streetsblog.org/2012/10/12/sf-transit-street-improvements-could-get-a-boost-from-vehicle-license-fee/>

## Other

### 5% of successful transportation finance measures, 2000-2012

In 2012, 79% of transportation ballot measures passed in the U.S. Common factors for success shared by campaigners at the CFTE Conference include:

- Highlight specific projects (but only if they're popular with the general public).
- Have a system in place to ensure fiscal responsibility. Create a citizens review committee with oversight.
- Emphasize the low cost per household
- Emphasize the “localized money” argument. Stress economic gains and job creation.

Advocates for ballot measures that failed noted that bad timing, bad messaging and the wrong spokesperson were the primary reasons for failure.

## Steps For Your Campaign

So, you have a ballot measure opportunity in your community and want to know how to get started? Below are steps for your campaign, suggested by seasoned advocates from Atlanta, Baton Rouge, San Diego, Salt Lake City, Tampa, Seattle, and more.



### 1. Establish a timeline and understand the first steps in your campaign

The ideal campaign timeline is 6-9 months: no less than 3 or more than 12 months. Start social media 6 months before your campaign to establish a network of supporters and buy a domain name for your campaign. Create a campaign budget, including expenses for polling. In the project selection process, consider that funding packages and combinations of investments often work the best, so people aren't voting against specific projects.

### 2. Consider the election year and type

Research the voter history, turnout rates and anti-tax trends of your community and choose an election cycle accordingly. Typically, general /presidential elections are best if you have a history of high voter turnout and off-year / special elections are more difficult unless in conservative communities. The most important tip is to call the election when you're ready.

Look to previous successes for tips and inspiration. Richmond County, South Carolina successfully passed a penny sales tax measure to fund transit and bike/ped<sup>6</sup>. Lynden, Washington also instituted a sales tax increase that paired transit with active transportation. See the previous campaign successes later in this report.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cfte.org/elections/331/richland-county>

### 3. Understand the politics and learn how you get on the ballot. Understand where your voters will come from and how to reach out to them.

Ballot measures are legal in 24 states<sup>7</sup>. Know the language requirements and other laws in your state. Is a petition required to get on the ballot? Is a county commission vote required? Know the politics and the political players. For example:

- **Georgia and Washington** require enabling legislation;
- **Colorado** has a strict Taxpayers Bill of Rights. A petition is required to be on the ballot and campaigns must use specific language (including amount of tax increase, annual cost to taxpayers, cumulative cost over time including principal and interest, etc);
- **California** already has a sales tax-add on enabling legislation but needs 2/3 vote to pass;
- **Florida** has ballot length requirements

Consider the geographic scope and where the voters are coming from. You don't have to convince everyone; focus your efforts on convincing half the voters well. And, never forget the power of the grassroots – knock on doors!

### 4. Find your champion

It is essential to have a trusted champion that will reach everyone. Think of recognized entities associated with local hospitals, school districts, university officials, community leaders, local celebrities, etc. Mayors usually aren't as effective as a regional political leader, unless it is a city-only measure. Avoid chambers of commerce or others who may be seen as having a financial or political stake in the measure. Seek endorsements from newspapers and partner organizations with clout; as much as possible, avoid partisanship in your endorsements.

### 5. Test your message and stick to 3 or fewer talking points that resonate the most

Professional polling and ballot language has been worth 5-10 percentage points in previous transportation ballot measures. The most important time for polling (you can use a focus group) is before you write the ballot language. Poll again to test message and messenger right before the vote to test your message and support. Educate voters on what they'll see at the ballot box and name your campaign ac-

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.citizensincharge.org/learn/primer>



cordingly. Visit <http://www.cfte.org> for sample ballot language and for examples of successful campaign materials.

Additional tips for ballot language and campaign outreach materials:

- Use **humor**
- In your campaign literature, include **FAQs** with responses known to work;
- **Avoid “tax” and “fee”**; instead use language such as “transportation reform plan” or “expenditure plan.” But, don’t confuse your voters! Always consider the **medium** and who sends the message
- Keep it **simple**, answering the question “What’s in it for me?”
- Focus on **positive results** that resonate to your voters: e.g. economy, jobs, less traffic, getting home faster
- Use **aspirational messaging** and appeal to the voters’ emotions. For example, check out this advertisement from St. Louis<sup>8</sup>:



**Social media** is an essential tool! Use it to create a brand for your campaign. Use an action center on your homepage that links to a campaign-specific page, and consider a money bomb to reach short-term fundraising goals. Suggestions for using social media<sup>9</sup>:

- **Blogs**: Blog 1-2 times each week for your campaign
- **Facebook**: Post 2-3 times each week. Ask questions when you post and have others post on your page to make it interactive. Use photos, images and maps. Don’t repost or link to Twitter.
- **Twitter**: 5-7 times each day. Repost, live tweet, tell news, keep it fresh and exciting. Use campaign hashtags with every post.

<sup>8</sup> <http://cmt-stl.org/>

<sup>9</sup> Ashley Robbins, [cctgirl@gmail.com](mailto:cctgirl@gmail.com), [@cctgirl](https://twitter.com/cctgirl)

## 6. Don't just give data, answer "so what?"

Buy-in happens in less than 30 seconds. Rely on repetition and soundbites to communicate your message. Build your members into campaign advocates and give them something to repeat and leave behind when talking with the public. Use "you" verses "the system" and personalize your message by addressing the following questions that voters have:

- **What's in it for me?** Show that there are benefits, whether or not you walk or ride your bike.
- **Can I trust you?** Show accountability, follow through and a track record of success. This is most relevant when working with transit on a joint ballot measure.
- **What should I care?** Segment your audience and address individual concerns.
- **Who supports this?** Profile a variety of community champions.
- **Who's against it?** Understand the organized opposition and address their arguments early on. The community should hear from you first, not your critics.
- **Where can I learn more?** Use social media to direct people to more information.
- **What one thing should I know?** Decide this and stay on message.

*"Make sure you're transparent and dispense with the vague. To be successful, ballot measures need to be specific. Measures should correspond to a map – show specifically where improvements will be."*

- Allison Leach, of the Center for Transportation Excellence

## Partnering with Transit

Bicycle and pedestrian organizations are, in many communities, new players in ballot measures. Transportation measures have largely left biking and walking infrastructure out, but we are seeing that change, as more and more polls are finding that multi-modal measures are more popular with voters.

How can you – as pedestrian and bicycle advocates – work together with your transit partners to achieve success at the ballot box for multi-modal ballots?

Here are some tips<sup>10</sup> from Andrew Austin, founding Executive Director at Americans for Transit<sup>11</sup>:

- **Relationships** are key. Working with businesses, labor and other groups is important so that biking and walking priorities are heard and addressed.
- There are **opportunities** to use money on biking and walking even if the funds are not dedicated. In Seattle, money that was labeled for “station access” is being used to build bike/ped facilities to connect to stations.
- It’s essential to **explain** to people — no matter their transportation modes — how the measure will help them. Explain how building transit, bike and pedestrian infrastructure will help everyone. Use a unified coalition and unified messaging. Talking about safety can be really effective.
- Anti-transit ballot measures are a growing trend, but luckily many of these are failing. Doing **proactive** work can help to show political support for transit and ward off attacks.

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/images/uploads/Ballot\\_Measures.pdf](http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/images/uploads/Ballot_Measures.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <http://americansfortransit.org/>

## Campaigns in Progress

### Austin, TX: Bike Austin

The City of Austin is all but certain to place a ballot measure for “urban rail” for \$300-700 million on the November 2014 ballot. Bike Austin<sup>12</sup> is advocating that at least \$20 to \$40 million be devoted to station-catchment-area bicycle and pedestrian improvements, which will improve the synergy between public mass transit and biking and walking to increase mixed-mode trips.



Advocates are actively working with members of the City Council, which will initiate the ballot process, and the Alliance for Public Transportation, Austin’s local mass transit advocacy organization. Together, they have established a draft timeline, an initial list of key stakeholders to bring on board, and a top-level list of bike/ped needs in transit-catchment areas.

Bike Austin has experience with successful ballot measures. The organization worked as part of a coalition of local bicycle, pedestrian and parks advocates to successfully pass an Austin transportation bond in November 2010 that included half of its \$90 million funding for bike and pedestrian infrastructure. In the Travis County November 2011 bond election, \$3.3 million was established specifically for bike safety improvements beyond other items that included funding for Complete Streets and off-street trails.

And it was recently announced that the City of Austin will be including suburban transit catchment areas in this year’s (2013-2014) Austin Bike Plan amendments.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.bikeaustin.org>

## Boulder, CO: Community Cycles

Community Cycles<sup>13</sup> has been working with its partners in the Boulder Transportation Advisory Board to get two measures on the November 2013 ballot, supporting a local sales tax that would fund maintenance and expansion of bike/ped infrastructure.

On August 20, the City Council voted to put the measures on the ballot. The two ballot measures authorize a .15 percent sales tax for 16 years (one measure creates the tax in 2014, the other extends the tax through 2030). The ballot measures, if passed, will generate new local funds for biking and walking infrastructure and programs, including a proposed “road diet” that will prioritize upgrading our existing, substandard bike lanes and sidewalks, and completing missing links in our multi-use trail system. These tax monies will also support much-needed bikeway system maintenance, including surface restoration, replacement of missing signage, and modern signalization.

Successful creation of this tax will create significant funding for the next 16 years, with a good likelihood of tax funds extending even beyond.

## Indianapolis, IN: Alliance for Health Promotion

The Indiana Citizens’ Alliance for Transit<sup>14</sup>, a project of the Alliance for Health Promotion<sup>15</sup>, is working with more than 160 public sector and corporate partners<sup>16</sup> – including AARP Indiana, the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors, the American Planning Association Indiana Chapter, and the Governor’s Council for People with Disabilities – on Indy Connect Now<sup>17</sup>, the campaign to fund the expansion of transit service in Central Indiana.

The Indy Connect plan, which is the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization’s long range plan, includes significant investment in pedestrian and bicycle facilities (about 7 percent of funding). In addition, it is fully expected that multi-mod-

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<sup>13</sup> <http://communitycycles.org/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.indianacat.org/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.healthbydesignonline.org/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.cirta.us/pages/resolutions/default.aspx>

<sup>17</sup> <http://indyconnectnow.com/pages/home/default.aspx>



al improvements – particularly in station areas or as connectivity to bus stops – will occur alongside transit improvements using the dedicated funding source created by the tax increase.

In Indiana, the state legislatures need to authorize both the ability of local units of government to increase local option income taxes and the use of a referendum process to do so (so that citizens can ultimately decide to tax themselves to fund transit). Advocacy efforts are focused on ensuring that the 2014 Indiana General Assembly will authorize the referendum process, with the referendum ideally occurring in November of 2014.

Advocates in Indianapolis are working closely with transportation agencies to promote public involvement opportunities, be included in strategic discussions regarding policy and direction, and provide direct input on project activities.

## Jackson County, MO: BikeWalkKC

Jackson County is planning for a 1 percent sales tax for multi-modal transportation, including commuter rail, streetcar, bus, multi-use trails, bike lanes, and bike share. The countywide tax would raise \$80 million per year for at least 30 years.

The trail and bike lane investment could potentially front-loaded in the first few years to provide a big bang impact. A prominent component of the plan will be acquisition and development of the Rock Island Corridor into a Rail-with-Trail facility that will comprise the final piece of the Katy Trail extension into the heart of the Kansas City region.

The countywide plan is focused on delivering a comprehensive, multimodal network that supports economic development, public health, mobility, recreation, and investment. Completing the Katy Trail connection into the heart of the metro area would open up a whole new industry of bike tourism in the region, leveraging the existing bike tourism that already thrives along the existing Katy Trail. This plan would put 2 million people within a day's ride of the trail. It would also create a direct link between Kansas City and St. Louis, the bookends of Missouri's economy.

BikeWalkKC<sup>18</sup> has been working closely with elected officials, agency staff and the Jackson County Commuter Rail Coalition, a regional stakeholders group that includes transit operators, advocates, the business sector, faith communities and disability advocates. BikeWalkKC and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) co-chaired a work group of local jurisdictions to identify high priority trail and bike route corridors for future funding, and was included in a November 2012 field trip with county officials, local mayors, and others to visit the Cleveland, OH, transit system. Should the tax be approved by voters, advocates anticipate being involved in a subsequent discussion to establish the formal process for final projection selection and funding disbursement.

Selection of an election date is pending the final outcome of negotiations with the railroads that would host commuter trains. The coalition is committed to bringing a comprehensive, multi-modal plan to the ballot, hopefully sometime in 2014.

A successful measure would be a huge win for walking and biking infrastructure. Jackson County currently is the densest and most populated county in the region, but has no dedicated funding source for walking and biking. Several adjacent suburban counties have implemented sales, use, and property taxes for trail development, leaving the urban core and inner suburbs far behind in walking and biking investments.

The Kansas City region is on the verge of a transportation revolution with the combination of grassroots support and political leadership -- and it is closer than ever to embracing rail transit and a truly comprehensive multimodal network. At the grassroots level the region is experiencing unprecedented progress and an entrepreneurial, DIY attitude to get things done. From bike share to the streetcar starter line under construction to the creation of four community bike shops to crowdfunding, KC residents are creating opportunities for themselves and rolling up their sleeves to remake the community.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.bikewalkkc.org>

## Sacramento, CA: WALKSacramento

WALKSacramento<sup>19</sup> is leading a ballot measure campaign to provide community support to urge Sacramento Regional Transit to lead the placement of a regional sales tax measure on the Sacramento County ballot in November 2014 to fund transit and road rehabilitation. They are partnering with the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates, the Environmental Council of Sacramento, the Sacramento Housing Alliance and the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District.

The Sacramento regional transit service has lost a third of its operating budget since the economy collapsed, and the regional planning blueprint is based on a transit network that can only be put in place through a dedicated transit funding source, which polling says is within reach.

Polling finds that voters wish to fund road repair along with regional transit service. WALKSacramento's campaign will urge that a requirement that road repairs "complete the street," adding needed bike and pedestrian facilities when roads are repaired. Road rehabilitation has proven to be a very cost-effective way to support active transportation.

## Greenville, SC: Upstate Forever

The Greenville County Council is considering putting a transportation penny sales tax referendum on the 2014 ballot. They are currently leaning towards a process that would result in revenues funding only road projects, so advocates are working to make sure that there is a clear allocation for bike/ped projects and transit as well. Upstate Forever<sup>20</sup>, a local organization advocating for sustainable communities, and local partners plan to conduct a public poll that seeks to determine whether Greenville County voters would be more likely to support a local sales tax referendum that includes bike, pedestrian, and/or transit projects, or one that focuses solely on funding road projects.

South Carolina state law provides several avenues through which a local transportation sales tax option may be implemented, each of which results in a different

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.walksacramento.org/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.upstateforever.org>

revenue allocation across projects that support various transportation modes. Advocates are looking to Charleston County, where a public poll showed that voters were most likely to support a local transportation sales tax referendum if some of the generated funds would provide for open space. The campaign therefore focused primarily on open space and the measure was passed narrowly in 2004.

In 2012 – after two failed ballot measures over four years – citizens of the city of Greenville voted for a multi-modal transportation penny sales tax, which will provide more than \$80.8 million for biking, walking and greenway infrastructure through 2034. Advocates are using this multi-modal project demand as a model for the county bond.

If the sales tax referendum is successful, nearly \$70 million dollars in revenue will be collected annually. If even 5 to 10 percent of this goes to fund pedestrian and bike projects, the amount would equate to approximately \$3.5 to \$7 million invested in infrastructure that supports active transportation, the impact of which would be a “game-changer” for walking and biking facilities.

## Tucson, AZ: Living Streets Alliance

Advocates at Living Streets Alliance<sup>21</sup> are now working on the adoption of a new regional pedestrian plan and passage of a “Pedestrian Safety and Walkability Improvements” bond program in Fall 2014, asking for \$50 million over 5 years for safe pedestrian infrastructure. **See page 21 for information on Tucson’s previous campaign win.**

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.livingstreetsalliance.org>

## Past Campaigns

### Alameda County, CA: East Bay Bicycle Coalition

The East Bay Bicycle Coalition<sup>22</sup> in 2012 supported Measure B<sup>23</sup>, a high-profile measure in Alameda County, CA, which would have extended and augmented a half-cent sales tax to improve multi-modal transportation with an unprecedented 11 percent of funding allocated to bicycle and pedestrian projects. In a 30-year period, the county would have seen more than \$1 billion for bike/ped projects.



Requiring a two-thirds supermajority, the measure failed to pass in November 2012 by only 0.13 percent – less than one vote per precinct. However, support generated around Measure B1 showed officials that the majority of Alameda County residents favor options for better transportation.

Advocates at EBBC sat on the Citizens Advisory Committee to develop the Expenditure Plan for Measure B1 and worked closely with their partner organization Transform on the Campaign Committee for B1. Additionally, EBBC formed a great partnership with the county transportation agency.

“The Alameda County Transportation Commission has nothing but high praise about our work on the campaign,” Dave Campbell, EBBC’s Advocacy Director, said. “Our relationship has never been stronger, and it’s only gotten better since the election. We’ll be on the campaign committee next election because they know they’ll need us next time to make sure this thing passes.”

“It’s a great lesson for other advocacy groups,” he continued. “You often build clout when you oppose something and defeat it. But you build as much clout or more by partnering and succeeding with a transportation agency.”

Advocacy Advance awarded EBBC a Rapid Response Grant for their campaign efforts, which enabled the organization to buff up on staff and advocacy power.

“Before 2012, we were still trying to figure out how to have a full-time person doing

<sup>22</sup> [www.ebbc.org](http://www.ebbc.org)

<sup>23</sup> [www.yesonb1.com](http://www.yesonb1.com)



bike advocacy,” Campbell said. “We were essentially a staff of 4 before the campaign, and now we’re around 6.5. It resulted in so much support from our members and our donors that we have a full-time advocacy staff. Our volunteer coordination, resources, and procedures are much stronger now...The Rapid Response grant helped us do the work,” he recalled. “Coupled with another comparable grant, we were able to hire a campaign fellow to do a lot of the legwork, including coordinating 100 volunteers.”

Efforts are currently underway in California to lower the voter threshold for transportation measures to 55 percent, and the county is forming an ad hoc committee to recommend a 2014 or 2016 return to the ballot for Measure B1.

### Campaign tips from Dave Campbell, Advocacy Director of EBBC:

- **Set up regular meeting with the elected officials who are on the decision-making body.** Meet with them and with a group of stakeholders from a wide array of organizations.
- **Get on the campaign committee.** Having information about the campaign’s functions and having a voice in the campaign planning is really important.
- **Show officials what the people want.** EBBC did several rounds of polling to see what voters were saying about the measure. It was important to sit down with elected officials and show them what voters wanted.

## Atlanta, GA: Atlanta Bicycle Coalition

All eyes were on Atlanta, the conference’s host and the city with the most high-profile ballot measure failure in 2012. A transportation special-purpose local-option sales tax (T-SPLOST<sup>24</sup>), a \$7.2 billion transportation plan, was opposed by the Sierra Club and the Tea Party – not your typical coalition.

The Atlanta Bicycle Coalition<sup>25</sup> helped to identify bicycle and pedestrian projects to be funded by T-SPLOST, and when the ballot measure failed, they were quick to address the question, “what now?”

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.ajc.com/news/news/state-regional-govt-politics/voters-reject-transportation-tax/nQXfq/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.atlantabike.org/>

In January, the Advocacy Advance team met with ABC board and staff<sup>26</sup> for a customized Winning Campaigns Training to help develop a “Good Streets” campaign to obtain a parking surcharge for bike, pedestrian, transit, and street improvements. (Additionally, advocates worked with Mayor Kasim Reed and the City Council to pass a \$2.5 million bond<sup>27</sup> that will fund 15 miles of high-quality bicycle infrastructure in Atlanta this year.

## Fayetteville, AR

In 2006, the City of Fayetteville issued a vote for a 1% Sales Tax increase divided into 4 projects, two for a new sewer plant, one for streets, and one for trails. The trails portion passed by the largest margin and provided \$2.1 million of dedicated funding to trail construction. The trails portion of funding was utilized to construct the Scull Creek Trail in Fayetteville.

## St. Louis County, MO: Trailnet

In April 2013, voters in St. Louis City and St. Louis County approved the Prop P ballot measure to increase the tax percentage dedicated to building the on and off road bicycle network. The 3/16th cent tax will provide \$38.5 million for greenways and parks. This is an increase to the Prop C tax measure passed by voters in 2000 to fund a regional trail system.

Despite the fact that voters now have twice passed such a tax, the network cannot be completed while St. Louis County’s policies disallow bike facilities. St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic updated their Bicycle Facilities Plan in December of 2012, banning all facilities except a 14’ wide shared outer lane. This policy prevents key connections from being included in municipality bicycle planning and implementation.

**Trailnet<sup>28</sup> is advocating for better policies in St. Louis County, which is es-**

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.advocacyadvance.org/media/blog/atlantas-big-bicycling-ambitions>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.atlantabike.org/2.5millionforbikeprojects>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.trailnet.org>

sential to tap Prop P funds and ensure that citizens' tax dollars go to support the projects they voted for in April. Advocacy Advance awarded Trailnet a Rapid Response Grant for this urgent campaign to ensure the dollars raised through ballot measures actually fund the identified projects, and agencies are accountable to the taxpayers.

### Campaign tips from Rhonda Smythe, Policy and Advocacy Manager, Trailnet:

- **Be sure to pay attention to local policy.** A policy in one county prohibited bike lanes, so in the future, Trailnet will be careful to look carefully at local laws to make sure policies align with ballot measure.
- **Describe the benefits of the measure for everybody.** Often, messaging for biking and walking does not resonate with elected officials and with the larger public. Use messaging that is positive and forward thinking.
- **Use proactive messaging.** Missouri advocates have had success with messages about economic development and how biking, walking, and transit funding helps to retain population.

## Tucson, AZ: Living Streets Alliance

In 2006, voters in Pima County, AZ, approved the Regional Transit Authority's \$2.1 billion, 20-year regional transportation plan and half-cent sales tax to fund the plan. The same sales tax had been defeated in four prior elections<sup>29</sup>. The losses were by a 60 – 40 percent margin. This victory was reported as a 60 – 40 percent approval.

The 2006 measure passed with \$80 million specifically dedicated to bicycle and pedestrian projects in addition to all the bike/ped elements as part of the larger roadway projects.

There is wide agreement locally that the ballot passed because there was something for everyone: regional roadway corridor expansions, transit, bike/ped, wildlife linkages and Main Street assistance. No matter how you move around the community, you were personally invested in wanting the funding to pass.

**Advocates at Living Streets Alliance are now working on the adoption of a new regional pedestrian plan and passage of a "Pedestrian Safety and Walk-**

<sup>29</sup> <http://beforeitsnews.com/alternative/2012/09/brief-history-of-pima-countys-election-reform-struggle-2472884.html%20>

ability Improvements” bond program in Fall 2014, asking for \$50 million over 5 years for safe pedestrian infrastructure.

## 11 Tips for a Successful Ballot Measure Campaign

From transit and active transportation advocates alike, there are some key suggestions for undertaking a ballot measure campaign<sup>30</sup>



1. **Timing:** Make sure timing is appropriate to have a local election. Measures risks and benefits of putting the measure on the ballot during a general vs. presidential election.
2. **Specific Plan:** Have a specific campaign plan in place and be prepared to handle the upcoming election.
3. **Simple Issue:** Make sure the issue is a simple issue, not too complicated to comprehend.
4. **Champion(s):** Identify a champion or someone local in charge of the campaign voters can connect with.
5. **Clear Benefits:** Make sure there are clear benefits to the voters. “What’s in it for them?” Clearly answer this question.
6. **Public Involvement:** It’s essential that there is a public involvement plan that is strategic and inclusive.
7. **Listen to Community:** Keep your eyes and ears open throughout the election process. Be prepared to answer the concerns of the community quickly.
8. **Regional Balance:** Your plan should include a regional balance of transportation options.
9. **Governance/Accountability:** Your plan should be responsible and show accountability. No “blank check” proposals.
10. **Creative Solutions:** Be creative in deciding the proposal you plan to put before voters. Ensure that you have considered all options.
11. **Adequate Funding:** Make sure your proposal will provide adequate funding for your project or your proposal.

And, as bicycle and pedestrian advocates enter the new territory of ballot measures, remember that your transit agencies and organizations have more experience in this realm. Make strong partnerships, and push forward funding plans that benefit transit users, as well as people who bike and walk.

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.cfte.org/pages/elevenkeys>



## Additional Resources

Working with Transit to Win Ballot Measures, Advocacy Advance<sup>31</sup>

10 Lessons Learned from Transit Funding and Finance Campaigns”  
Northeastern University<sup>32</sup>

Advocacy Advance’s presentation at the CFTE Conference, Part 1<sup>33</sup>

Advocacy Advance’s presentation at the CFTE Conference, Part 2<sup>34</sup>

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**Page 12:** City of Fayetteville

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**Page 22:** Trailnet

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31 [http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/images/uploads/Ballot\\_Measures.pdf](http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/images/uploads/Ballot_Measures.pdf)

32 <http://www.northeastern.edu/dukakiscenter/wp-content/uploads/10-Lessons-Learned-from-Transit-Funding-and-Finance-Campaigns.pdf>

33 [http://www.advocacyadvance.org/site\\_images/content/CFTE\\_presentation\\_combined.pdf](http://www.advocacyadvance.org/site_images/content/CFTE_presentation_combined.pdf)

34 [http://www.advocacyadvance.org/site\\_images/content/Tom\\_Hawkins\\_CFTE.pdf](http://www.advocacyadvance.org/site_images/content/Tom_Hawkins_CFTE.pdf)