

RIDING THE BUS WITH MOLLY

My name is Molly and I live by Expressway, off North Reserve. I work for the City Attorney's office, located in City Hall, which is downtown. In the summertime, I drive most often, but my car canNOT handle the winter - it's two-wheel drive, rear wheel drive, and a manual transmission. **In the wintertime, the taking the bus and carpooling with my boyfriend are the best options for me.** I feel safer because I know the bus will make it. And I know that the 4-wheel drive vehicle that my boyfriend has will make it... but my car will not. Driving my car in the winter is so anxiety inducing. It's not fun in the morning when you're so anxious and then you get to work. It's really hard to unpack that anxiety. Having an option that is safe, like riding the bus or carpooling, takes that pressure off me to drive. Plus, our busses are free, and I think it's fantastic!

I started riding the bus and carpooling because of the City's Sustainable Trip Challenge this past summer. I thought it was interesting and I also like a challenge.

I'm very competitive, so I was like, 'I can do that, no problem.' Really, I had been wanting to because there's a bus stop right outside my apartment complex. I was like, 'I wonder how long it would take me to get there?' **The Challenge was the push I needed to actually try; to test it out and see what it was like to take the bus.** When I did the Trip Challenge, I saw it as a way to test run getting to downtown during the winter. My plan was if I can't get ride with my boyfriend, then at least I can rely on the bus to get me to work on time.

When I was first thinking about taking the bus, I started by looking up the Mountain Line website first and then trying to figure out their schedules. And then I went to the Missoula Motion office, and I got a printed bus schedule. Then I downloaded the Transit app.

My other piece of advice is in the form of a story: I get to the bus stop, I'm on time, everything's great. I have my coffee in hand, I have everything I need. The bus pulls up and the bus driver says, 'I'm sorry, but you can't bring that coffee cup.' because it was a disposable Starbucks cup and it didn't have a twist lid. I had no idea! So I drank down three sips, opened it up, and poured it out. But because it was so full

when I poured it out, it splashed back all over my feet and sandals. So, my advice to anyone new to riding the bus is: **when you take the bus, make sure you have a twist lid on your drinks!**

The Mountain Line drivers are all super nice. They are so willing and ready to be like 'This bus is going here. You are going to want to get on this bus then transfer to this route.' It can be confusing when it's new, but they know because they do it every day.

When I take the bus, my favorite part is that I get to have a little reading time. Or I listen to podcasts. In the fall I really enjoyed when I could look at all the beautiful trees changing colors. That was really cool.

I think a misconception people have is that they think the bus is not safe. On my route it's a lot of professionals who are going to downtown, like myself. I'll see the same few people every time; a guy who works for the County, there are several nurses, a couple of construction workers who are working out on Broadway and they get off at the stop there. Our busses are free, and I think it's fantastic!

If I could think of any improvements... it's a selfish one, but I want more busses! (laughs) ...but really I think they do a really good job.

podcasts on the bus because when you're sitting all day long looking at your computer, your neck kind of hurts looking down. In the fall I really enjoyed when I could look at all the beautiful trees changing colors. That was really cool.

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