

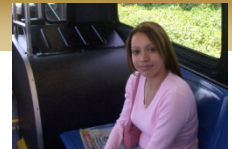
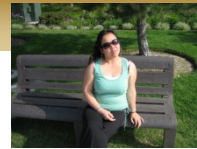
» » » for Public Transportation

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- Though many drivers and riders alike find youth on the bus annoying or worse, young riders can be encouraged to see the bus as “their bus,” and to help keep it safe, clean and pleasant.
- In-school travel training—including safety, sensitivity, system-specific “how-tos”, and transit’s community benefits—can be a cost-effective solution.
- Effective programs partner with teens and *involve* them in transit.
- Self-funding partnership opportunities may exist with schools, police, community groups, and private or government entities.

## NEWS:

- Majic Consulting Group is looking forward to working with Victor Valley Transit Authority on marketing and outreach programs, including those focused on youth.
- Majic is also looking forward to working again with Council of San Benito County Governments, on upcoming Triennial Performance Audits.



## Transforming "Teen Trouble" on Transit

It's an issue every driver and rider knows. Though students from junior high to college are an important part of any transit system's ridership, youth on the bus can be annoying, or worse.

The **City of Santa Clarita Transit (SCT)** has recently had success in addressing this issue.



According to Adrian Aguilar, Interim Transit Coordinator for SCT, teen misbehavior on Santa Clarita buses mainly involves boisterousness and graffiti. Violence is not a big problem, though fights erupt occasionally, mostly among the teens, not involving other riders.

Over the past 18 months, SCT has begun rolling out a **five-pronged approach** that has been successful in addressing misbehavior

and building community relations. As programs continue to be developed, success is likely to grow.

Though this agency's success may be partly related to the close-knit, upscale, low-crime nature of its city and schools, the elements of its approach are open to other agencies to borrow and tailor to their individual situations.

### Prong 1: School District

SCT has established good relations with the local secondary school district, working to identify and discipline teen offenders. Students onboard/at stops during school hours, or on the way to/from school and/or school functions, can be disciplined for bad behavior through schools, including suspension, expulsion from the district, or being barred from events such as grad night.

### Prong 2: Cameras /Sheriff

SCT also has good relations with the Sheriff's Department, and recently installed onboard cameras

on all its buses. SCT works with the Sheriff and schools to identify, and discipline as appropriate, teens caught misbehaving on camera. As a result, Aguilar estimates 10-12 teens were charged with graffiti vandalism last year.

### Prong 3: "Class Project"

Coordinating with administrators at new junior high and high schools, SCT helped students produce transit education videos as a class project. The videos were shown over in-class televisions as part of morning news broadcasts.

Students were enthusiastic; the process and results increased teens' transit awareness and sense of transit "ownership".

This program exemplifies *partnering* with teens, found effective to reduce crime by a **National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)** report. Programs should:

- **Involve teens** at all levels (including

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Call Majic Consulting Group to transform *your* "teen trouble" with the Majic touch.



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planning) to promote making good choices;

- **Guide teens** to “do it themselves”;
- **Value contributions;**
- **Encourage reflection;**
- **Build on teens’** need for friendship.

Similar programs could include production of news articles/print ads, “bus clean-up days,” etc.

Beyond better behavior, benefits might include:

- **Community relations;**
- **Media exposure;**
- **Transit awareness among parents,** particularly those not fluent in English;
- **Free/low-cost PR,** including materials uniquely effective in being created *by students, for students.*

**Prong 4: School Outreach**

Building on the success of its pilot program, SCT is planning district/city-wide outreach, including in-school presentations.

SCT’s history suggests new programs will innovate in engaging students, beyond the traditional lecture.

Other agencies have also found ways to engage students. New Jersey’s **Traffic Safety on the Move** converted a bus into a portable classroom.

Riverside Transit Agency partnered with Majic to create a **RoadTrip**, an education program for grades 7-12. This award-winning 3-D DVD featured an interactive team challenge to, as the NCPC suggests, **build on friendship’s key role.** Teens played in teams, which encouraged participation and *involved* youth in transit.



**Prong 5: Graffiti Programs**

SCT, the Sheriff and other City departments have joined forces in a **Graffiti Task Force and Rewards Program**, with a new “e-service” to report graffiti vandalism in the city, by text, email or phone. The Program offers up to \$500 for information that leads to arrest and conviction. The City website reports over \$4000 paid last year.

The Program, advertised onboard, is especially useful to stem bus graffiti and reach teen riders, with their phones or PDAs.

**Opportunities for You**

As SCT’s example shows, ways to address “teen trouble” include use of both “carrot” and “stick.”

Agencies can work with schools, police, community groups, and private, state or federal youth-program funding sources.

Let us help you establish programs to transform *your* “teen trouble”—with the Majic touch.